

Rage and Resistance: An Analysis of Macho-Feudalism in Ninotchka Rosca's (1998) "Generations"

Desiree Tizon Bañares

Far Eastern University, Manila, Philippines

Abstract. The feminine body is often depicted in media and culture as a territory of historical abjection, a vessel of colonial burden, a commodity under authoritarian rule, and a sociopolitical Other. While this does not stray far from the reality of feminine experiences, I also insist on the power of literature to serve as counter-narratives that explore the potential of this Other to subvert its victimized position and escape that which exploits her. For this reason, in this article, I analyzed "Generations" by Ninotchka Rosca (1998) by observing its depictions of intersectional gendered experiences and survival under Macho-feudalist systems. The events of domestic exploitation, militarized structures, and sexual violence in the short story and the context of a hypermasculine political state are the primary evidence discussed. With this narrative evidence, I used Althusser's (1970) framework on ideological and state apparatuses to explore the Macho-feudalist mechanisms that produce and reproduce the conditions that naturalize the oppression and Otherness of women. More importantly, I also argued that Rosca (1998) subverts this narrative as she converts the role of feminine victimhood into powerful feminine rage and vengeance. This article introduced an observation of Macho-feudalism in Philippine literature. I discussed a counter-narrative to destabilize systemic machismo and ideal victimhood through this creative territory and academic analysis.

Keywords. *subversive narratives, feminine rage, feminine vengeance, feminist literature, Philippine literature*

Introduction

According to Althusser (1970) in *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, systems and various structures of power intersect and maintain themselves by constantly reproducing and reinstating the conditions of exploitation through repressive and ideological apparatuses.¹ Oppression persistently moves through the different sociopolitical mechanisms—such as the military, law, culture, and history—to naturalize its own existence and continuity. Consequently, the state's citizens do not always recognize, or resist, their own oppression. I see this in the general acceptance or tolerance of poverty, patriarchy, and war as examples.

As cultural mechanisms, the public media and literary and historical narratives often become tools to justify the dominance of one primary group over the *Other*,² or one powerful person over the masses. However, in an attempt to liberate, the oppressed can also make compelling attempts to reclaim their narrative power from repressive systems. They can produce counter-narratives that describe their oppression and name it, as well as narratives that open alternatives to the current

¹ Althusser (1970) categorizes two types of state apparatuses, the RSA and ISA. First, the Repressive State Apparatus or RSA stands for physically violent/governing agencies, like the military/police, governing administration, court, prison, etc. Second, the Ideological State Apparatus or ISA stands for private or semi-private agencies in human social life, like churches, schools, legal policies, political systems, media, culture, literature, film, etc. Both RSA and ISA are capable of affecting the way people subscribe or resist sociopolitical and class structures, or what Althusser (1970) would prefer to call systemic hegemony.

² The *Other* may singularly or collectively refer to a disadvantaged identity that is considered lacking, inferior, or removed by a dominating group (Staszak, 2008). It is associated with the feminine, the queer, the colonized, the poor, or the marginalized; all of whom suffer exclusion or discrimination by a dominant socio-political majority.

conditions of oppression. The literature of *Otherness* is an act of subverting systems of power, a demand for space and visibility. I believe this is often where feminist literature lies, at the frontline of overcoming *Otherness* against sociopolitical frameworks of gender and subjugation.

As a subversive Filipino writer and activist, Ninotchka Rosca's literary voice amplifies issues on intersectional oppression (frequently the intersection between oppression of women, poverty, and rural-urban divide), and she attempts to use her literary output to promote the radical liberation of the *Other*. Her works often embody unapologetic narratives against political and social dominance while advocating for Filipino women's visibility (De Vera, 2020). She was taken as a political prisoner in 1972 during the Marcos Administration for the "suspicion of having committed or being about to commit rebellion, sedition and/or subversion" (Sipchen, 1988, para. 11). In her six months of detention, she underwent five heavily invasive and torturous interrogations. Because of this, Rosca explores the conflict of totalitarianism and politics in the context of her literary works. In this article, she traces the connections between political violence and traditional hypermasculine structures, which I analyzed as a counter-narrative to repressive and ideological state apparatuses.

One of her short stories, entitled "Generations" (Rosca, 1998), is set in the context of the Martial Law era in the Philippines. The plot follows a lower-class family in a rural setting and how they inherit generational burdens from both systems of poverty and patriarchy. It begins with the musings of Old Man Selo about his deceased wife and his past as a communist, then focuses on the present experiences of his family against a cruel landowner and the drunk habits of his son. This son, now father to a daughter and two boys, carries over his patriarchal inheritance by abusing his wife and children. This all leads to a critical component of the narrative being depicted by the eldest daughter, who sells her body to crony soldiers and saves her drunken father from imprisonment. As her father fails to acknowledge her sacrifice for him, the daughter kills him in a final act of anger against patriarchal figures and systems. This is the text I chose as the focus of this article.

Interestingly, it can also be observed that this daughter in "Generations" (Rosca, 1998) alludes to Juli in Jose Rizal's *El Filibusterismo* (1912/1891). Both young women have grandfathers by the name of Selo, their fathers become imprisoned or abducted, and they are both placed in economically vulnerable positions under totalitarian hypermasculine systems. They experience sexual abuse from authority figures of the state, specifically, the Spanish friars to Juli and the crony soldiers to the daughter. While the victimhood of women is a convention for a quantity of feminist analysis, I find that this does not satisfy the potential of literature to also serve as a gateway to overcoming or superseding oppressive structures.

An essential part of my analysis of "Generations" emphasizes the subversion of feminine victimhood. While Rizal (1912/1891) writes of Juli's tragic suicide, Rosca (1998) depicts a retaliation of anger and violence as the daughter kills her own father and marks her first resistance. The responses of both women to their sexual and systemic trauma are drastically different. Through this allusion, Rosca (1998) may be paralleling the Spanish colonizer's conquest with the Marcos totalitarian rule and radically refusing its continuity in the future. There is an acknowledgment of the generational origin of feminine subjugation, exacerbated by contexts of colonialism and dictatorships. One that I assume Rosca overturns as the woman no longer participates in the silencing and killing of the self, but instead seeks her own way to turn the blade towards her oppressors.

I find that many studies have been conducted on the works of Ninotchka Rosca, often observing vital elements of political criticism and resistance in the literary discourse. Arong and Hempel (2017), Davis (1999), Mendible (2012), and Watson (2022) were among the scholars who discussed the political and cultural nuances of Rosca's works, especially from a postcolonial lens. However, they focused mainly on the novel *State of War*. In "Decolonizing Bodies, Reinscribing Souls in the Fiction of Ninotchka Rosca and Linda Ty-Casper" by De Manuel (2004), the post-colonial woman is explicitly discussed and compared to the works of another writer.

My analysis of Rosca's (1998) work is perhaps most similar to Ojano's (2022), "Myth, Dream, and Resistance in Ninotchka Rosca and Emmanuel Lacaba's Fictions," though still fundamentally different in method and focus. It is in the discussion of "Generations" that Ojano (2022) writes: "For Rosca, sexual innocence is impossible in the kind of society propped on the commodifiable vulnerability of its women and children" (p. 26). We both criticized colonial and dictatorship structures in analyzing the intersections between women's socioeconomic and gendered positions.

However, since the article includes several works by Ninotchka Rosca and Emmanuel Lacaba, the discussion briefly touched on “Generations” before moving on to other literary works. Most articles on Rosca’s works utilize a different framework for analyzing resistance and opting to use the novel or whole collections. While it is commonly stated among the related literature that Rosca uses writing to recreate space and express narratives of resistance, no studies are specific to the feminine experience under Macho-feudalism’s repressive and ideological state apparatus. This may be attributed to the general use of Macho-feudalism in studies under politics and social sciences, like Morales (2015) and Prado (2005), rather than literary.

In this article, I analyzed specifically “Generations” by Ninotchka Rosca (1998) in its demonstration of the intersectional gendered experience under Macho-feudalism through domestic exploitation, militarized systems, and sexual violence. Additionally, I argued that Rosca (1998) overturns this tragic narrative with her own radical subversion as she converts the victimhood of her female protagonist into feminine rage and vengeance. I adapted the concept of Macho-feudalism in the context of Philippine literature and diversified its observation from mainly sociopolitical and historical studies to literature. It is also with Rosca (1998) that my criticism against oppressive systems is built towards an intention to subvert its powers. I discuss a counter-narrative to destabilize systemic machismo and ideal victimhood through this creative territory and academic analysis.

Macho-Feudalism and Structure

To set the parameters and framework of my analysis, I theorize that systemic and masculine power functions through repressive and ideological state apparatuses. I would like to emphasize the interconnection between class and gendered structures governing the abject feminine experience. “Generations” (Rosca, 1998) depicts a personal and systemic struggle under what I identify as Macho-feudalism.

This Macho-feudalism can be defined by digesting the two individual terms in the framework. In the first term, “macho” literally means male or masculine in Spanish. According to Mirandé (1997, as cited in Morales, 2015) in *Hombres y machos: Masculinity and Latino culture*, “macho” is an adjective typically associated with images of “male dominance, patriarchy, authoritarianism, and spousal abuse” (p. 229). In the second term, “feudalism” refers to traditional structures emphasizing power relations between masters and serfs, landowners and peasants, kings and subjects, and similar hierarchies. Therefore, Macho-feudalism³ is a traditional system of power that equates masculinity with aggression and virility—privileging the masculine as a master, owner, and ruler of structures. In addition, Prado (2005) described Macho-feudalism as a sinister “political instrument” (p. 75), and Ingoldsby (1991) framed machismo in the context of the household. With these definitions in mind, I maintain that the dominance of men in familial units has long mirrored and enabled the same political stratification of male dominance and feminine subjugation in the larger units of society.

Furthermore, while I recognize that the roots of Macho-feudalism are typically applied to Spanish and Latin cultures (Morales, 2015), I propose that the colonial history of the Philippines has stabilized male dominance and feudalism in the Filipino experience as well. Using what Althusser (1970) categorizes as repressive state apparatus (government and military) and ideological state apparatus (religion, education, family, legal policy, culture, etc.), the adherence to traditional gendered structures and ideologies has been transmitted between communities and generations. As a concept, Macho-feudalism provides an avenue to refer to colonial, gendered, and class domains. My viewpoint is similar to the statement by Rodriguez (1990) in summarizing the patriarchal history of the Philippines:

When the Spanish masters brought their institutions and transplanted them on native soil, the social being of women was invested with new meanings, new dimensions... This colonial legacy was more effectively systematized even later... This historical process of colonialism, feudalism, and capitalism led to the class division of Filipino society and to the sexual division of labor, and the gender subordination of women in the home and public workplaces. (p. 18-19)

³ Some refer to this framework as feudal machismo or feudal masculinity. But, while the difference between macho-feudalism and feudal machismo as terminologies have not been drawn theoretically, I exclusively use macho-feudalism in my work to emphasize the traditional oppressive system as possessing a masculine face. Macho is the adjective, and feudalism is the noun. It is not masculinity being criticized, but the premiere position it has been given in domestic and sociopolitical structures.

By creating and recreating conditions in the public and private life of *indios* (native-born inhabitants of the Philippine islands during the Spanish colonization) to modern Filipinos, patriarchal figures were continuously reinstated and privileged over feminine (and queer) identities. It is in this generational cycle in both systems and families that Macho-feudalism survives to objectify or abjectify women further by means of repressive and ideological state apparatuses.

The Acquiescing Wife

I observe that the most common manifestation of Macho-feudalism in both literature and society is domestic exploitation : the *pater—or father-figure—dominates the household and exploits the family for his own advantage and needs* (Ingoldsby, 1991). Althusser (1970) acknowledged the family ISA as one of the primary exposures to social order and even influences the resources for labor power. As an ideological state apparatus, the family structure can create and transmit hierarchical ideas from childhood to adulthood.

In "Generations," the mother's character is portrayed as the initial and prominent figure exploited by the dominant males in her life. Macho-feudalism as an ideology is continuously recognized and reinstated using a gendered and material performance (Althusser, 1970). The identity and value of men are positioned through physical aggression and ideological repetition, leading to the normalization of domestic violence and feminine subjugation.⁴

In the short story, after the father has been humiliated by the landowner's henchmen and proven ineffective in his role as the *padre de familia*, the father attempts to re-establish his position in the household by lashing out at his wife and children. The father throws a tantrum, and his wife cleans up (Rosca, 1998). She accepts his behavior and teaches her family to please their father after the example she sets. When the father comes home heavily inebriated, the women in the family try to control his temper. Rosca (1998) describes the father's arrival home in this paragraph:

Resentment came into the room. The man halted, prowled about the accusing air of his family. His insulted soul gave him pride. Son-of-a-goat, he said, he was a man, and a man had rights... Without a word, he smashed a blow into his wife's face (p. 274).

To deflect from his struggles and to protect his ego, the father projects his own vulnerability onto his family—especially his wife, who endures the violence and sees to his comfort or needs. He hits his wife in the face and then hits his daughter when she, too, tries to stop him. Unable to handle being at any point emasculated, the Macho domestic figure must find a way to mimic the physical power of the henchmen over territorial ownership and the military over the state. In Rosca's short story, the men of the house sleep and get drunk, while the women remain in a perpetual state of vigilance. I attribute the combination of the father's desire for superiority and his detestation of vulnerability as the epitome of machismo.

Additionally, I observed how the eldest daughter is expected to slowly transition into this role of domestic exploitation later in her life. Her mother teaches her to follow in the footsteps of maternal wifehood. The eldest daughter (unnamed in the story)⁵ does the chores and tasks in place of her mother and is constantly made responsible for her younger brothers. She is often reduced to her physical appearance and sexualized throughout the narrative. Her own grandfather describes her as a brown-skinned fifteen-year-old girl, "with her large eyes, her nice mouth, she could have a future" (Rosca, 1998, p. 270). It is insinuated in these lines that the future of young women depends on their physical appearance and desirability as if beauty is her only way out of poverty. The language against women, although not always physically enacted, reveals how they are to be treated and perceived.

⁴ This is a similar observation to the findings of Ingoldsby (1991) in *The Latin American Family: Familism vs. Machismo*.

⁵ As I reflect on this characterization, there are several angles that one can interpret the namelessness of the feminine character. It could have been intentional on the part of Rosca to leave the character as a vessel, that a woman may insert themselves into her fictional body and live through the resistance of the feminine protagonist. While the daughter could be a type of *every woman*, her namelessness may also emphasize her place in society. Without her own name, she is referred to in association to the man she despises – his daughter and nothing else. Although, I can not figure a definite reading on the intention behind the namelessness of the main family, except for Old Man Selo. I mention this as my way of thinking. For the most part, I wish to leave this interpretation of the names (or lack thereof) to the reader.

Fatherhood and manhood are rooted in the pressures of macho-feudalism, as the father is expected to provide for his wife and children. However, as compensation, the father is granted power over his family. The mother and children have no choice but to rely on him for their daily needs and protection from external threats. Their poverty intensifies this lack of access to personal safety and social mobility, most especially for women.

With the repressive performance of machismo, the women in Rosca's (1998) narrative are dehumanized as objects or properties. From the grandmother, then the mother of the family, and then the daughter—there is an observable pattern of subjugation and harm. When oppressive behavior is integrated into the social realities of individuals, I find that its reproduction becomes a systemic issue. Macho-feudalism relies on the creation and obedience of a pattern. Thus, while the working class are inherently exposed to exploitation because of their social status, other oppressive and traditional ideologies seep into their private lives (normalizing their oppression) and intensifying their dehumanizing conditions (Althusser, 1970). The family ISA becomes a tool to further position the feminine characters in the short story, such as the deprived and abused *Others*, so that the hierarchical system can benefit from repetition and normalization.

The Acquiescence of the Poor

Besides observing the ISA in family structures, a repressive state apparatus governs the larger frameworks of society in the narrative. The military and administration RSAs, when successfully installed in a system, enforce a structure that positions the masters and bourgeoisie over peasant families and vulnerable sectors. While patriarchal systems are at work in the context of my main text, so are the economic and political privileges of the RSAs.

I argue that the class struggle in “Generations” (Rosca, 1998) is rooted in an authoritarian and masculine system. In my analysis, the military in the short story represents the soldiers of the Marcos regime and may recall a part of Rosca's own personal experiences or those of her peers in the resistance movement. There are descriptions of curfews, informal pardons for community arrests, abuses of power, and prejudicial killings. Old Man Selo grieved over his fellow farmers who land grabbers and soldiers murdered. The mother asks her children to bring their father home because “It’s curfew time. If the soldiers find him, everything will be over for sure” (Rosca, 1998, p. 274). In a separate circumstance, the little brother says, “Who’ll complain against soldiers?” (Rosca, 1998, p. 279). The characters talk about military power as if it cannot be questioned. The fear of the masculine RSAs is worse than the fear of the father, likely because the general cruelty and capital forms of punishment are mostly state-sanctioned.

Similar cases were observable during the Marcos regime and were experienced by the writer herself. Despite not having been named in Rosca's (1998) short story, the presence of this ruling family was palpable through the characterization of military systems. Mijares (1976), in *The Conjugal Dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos*, noted that familial dynamics govern the regime. It places President Ferdinand Marcos as the “Father of the Nation” and his wife as a sociocultural maternal pillar. This Macho-feudal administration is governed by its own patriarchal symbol. I see this in the short story through the depiction of the political mechanisms used to control the activity of the masses in rural Philippines. The militarized society is normalized as it enables Macho-feudalism to function, reflected in military aggressions and dominance over the fearful rural peasant people.

In the short story, the system of macho-feudalism supports the male bravado of the father and the soldiers and ultimately leads to the acquiescence of the poor people to the superiority enforced by the intersectional systems (Ingoldsby, 1991; Prado, 2005). Interestingly, while masculine power is observed in both private and public spaces, the military and administration RSA vastly supersede the father's power in the household. These repressive agencies even steal from his resources and imprison him. I note that, despite the father's dominance over his wife and children, larger patriarchal structures govern the domains of political and economic access. The landowner's henchmen and the state's soldiers carry more influential positions over the father, which causes both his frustration and the plights of his wife and daughter. Men themselves compete for power under the system that initially privileges them.

The narrative creation and enactment of class struggles in “Generations” (Rosca, 1998) occur in a male-dominated society, and the standard of power is inherently related to manhood. Rosca (1998)

is not content with depictions of the more usual, simplified patriarchal society. Her story expands to the conflict between class-based haves and have-nots, and it similarly adds nuance to the experience of both women and men with the patriarchy. Rosca's (1998) narrative suggests an awareness of the complexity of the intersections of power structures and the role of male dominance within this intersection.

With this literary depiction, I see institutional examples and practices that illustrate how Macho-feudal ideologies are justified and encouraged in most spaces. The economic exploitation of lower-class families during the Marcos administration includes abusive working conditions for rural tenant farmers and constant exposure to police and military brutality, as demonstrated in "Generations." The people are subjected to continuous threats, and Rosca (1998) places women in the role of pacifiers and fixers. In her attempt to protect her husband, the grandmother helps him burn away the rebellious brand on his skin. The mother silently accepts physical abuse from her own husband to keep him from enacting violence elsewhere. The daughter puts herself at risk with the soldiers to reduce her father's sentence. These examples show how women endure intersectional experiences of oppression on top of already dire political circumstances.

I insist that these women frequently endure in the face of poverty because they do not have social power, education, or wealth to separate themselves from their macho familial and political abusers. Like the mother and daughter in Rosca's (1998) short story, women are not privileged to protect themselves from the system. However, at this point, I emphasize the importance of raising the abject position of women as both oppressed and possessing an unmeasured potential. This potential and possibility, which has been ideologically and institutionally repressed, opens the creative territory for subversion. Rosca (1998) depicts oppressive dictatorships and class systems while reimagining the possibilities of overthrowing and destabilizing them at any cost.

Resisting the System

The most explicit depiction of Macho-feudalism in Rosca's (1998) work is the sexual violence against women. The soldiers took advantage of the poor, nameless, and young girl like it was routine for them. When the eldest daughter asks them to release her father, the soldiers reply, "Maybe you can pay some other way. What do you think?" (Rosca, 1998, p. 277). The soldier even tells her, "You owe your father that much... Any self-respecting daughter would do much more" (p. 277). He adds that she is lucky to find only four, insinuating that all four would take turns. Aware of the soldiers' demands, the daughter pays her father's fine with her body—coerced into accepting sexual abuse. I read into this depiction that since the girl has no access to finance, safety, and quality education, she becomes a vulnerable victim of the male-dominated authoritarian system. She did not take pleasure nor comfort in her decision but merely used her feminine body as the only capital she possessed.

I argue this assault did not occur purely out of carnal desire. In the context of Rosca's (1998) "Generations," rape was not only a sexual act. More importantly, it was a show of systemic power and the intersectionality of the various systems. The scene is not just a literary depiction but also a parallel to historical realities.⁶ The perpetrators manifested male entitlement and supremacy in their abuse of young girls and other women. As men who are protected by the state and the system, the soldiers are aware that they could escape the consequences of their own actions. The female body was abused as a normalized example of male dominance. The rape was clear proof of where power resides: in systemic macho-feudalism. This conflict in "Generations" was perhaps the most dehumanizing event in the narrative as the young girl was reduced to an object for the sexual consumption of the soldiers. In the quotes mentioned above, I note how chronic it is for them to demand this price and share her body. Through her victimhood, the short story depicts the power of the patriarchal system within and over Filipino society.

More importantly, I am inclined to emphasize the importance of the subversion of this victimhood. Towards the end of Rosca's narrative, there is a dramatic and unexpected reversal. When her father laughs at the daughter's sacrifice and makes it seem like she is expected to pay the price for

⁶ The Human Rights Violations Victims' Memorial Commission (2023) discusses a direct correlation between militarization and gender inequality. The organization states that, during Martial Law era, "Soldiers looted houses and stores, killed domestic animals, stole or burned down crops, tortured men, and raped women. Such acts were normal under martial law, and they were committed with utter impunity" (para. 6).

his life with her own (Rosca, 1998, p. 278), the eldest daughter does not acquiesce. She does not tolerate her father's self-assertion of his macho rights. She no longer relented as her mother and society taught her. When her father insinuates that she is merely a subject in his service (mirroring her servicing of the male soldiers), she decides this would be the last time he would slight her. She grabs a jagged rock from the pathway and smashes her macho patriarchal father to the ground multiple times. The young girl kills her own father, her first and closest oppressor. She does this with her hands and an immediate tool from the side of the road. Over his unmoving body, she claims, "I have the right" (Rosca, 1998, p. 278). Because while the loss of her virginity and innocence may seem like the end of the story, she persists and refuses to accept it as an end. For her, it signifies the beginning of her resistance.

From the start of the narrative, she had known that her femininity would be used for the benefit of others. Her mother taught her this when swimming with her brothers: it is different because her body is different, and she is becoming a woman now. This awareness of her own social position was depicted again when she found out her father had been arrested, and the eldest daughter grinned with "her teeth bare. In the moonlight, her mouth seemed full of fangs" (Rosca, 1998, p. 275). Then she followed him to the military station, knowing fully well what demands she would have to accept. She had feigned ignorance in front of the soldiers and got what she wanted from them (her father's release). Without the masculine figures realizing it, she manipulated the male soldiers and felt she had merely compromised.

Her body was their family's most valued trading chip, and she used it to her advantage. Indeed, it was less a rape than her decision to allow herself to be raped. Thus, she would not let her father downplay her acquired power with her virginal blood. While the father had been incapable of resisting the landowner's henchmen and the state's soldiers, his daughter played them all a fool. Whether or not this power had been costly, she cared little for its implications: her body was always seen as a commodity to be spent. Like the *mimosa pudica* or *makahiya* plant that she despised, she too had this "deceptive shyness" with "its leaves folded and drooped but only to bare the thorns on its stems" (Rosca, 1998, p. 273). Perhaps, as I do in this analysis, she figured that nothing would be more emasculating or castrating of the father than owing one's freedom to one's own daughter and, worse, being slain by that exact feminine figure one considers lesser or weaker.

Rosca's "Generations" (1998) metaphorically represents the overcoming of patriarchal mechanisms, no matter how violent it becomes or how little success was achieved. The eldest daughter may not have shattered the whole system of oppression, but she had removed one of its purveyors in her life. She would most certainly pay for her defiance outside of the narrative. Although, for now, her violent resistance marks a radical feminine subversion against the patriarchal system.

I also hope to emphasize that Rosca (1998) does not literally nor exclusively advocate female empowerment through sexual weaponization and murder. Instead, I open the idea that her short story captures a radical and symbolic disavowal of Macho-feudalism and the state apparatuses that it moves through. The daughter's actions do not intend to appeal to logic and rationality. Instead, she is compelled by her own abjection and emotion in response to her context. The narrative shows how feminine rage can reclaim power and tip the scales, and to portray this vengeance as sinister oversimplifies the nuances of the feminine experience under layers of RSAs and ISAs.

The symbolic woman protagonist, who has undergone centuries of dehumanization and erasure, draws her resolution from her experiences and learnings from the Macho-feudalist system. She uses the system of machismo against itself. Since the woman has constantly been sexualized, she transforms her body into a tool for some form of control. Since the woman has always been violently oppressed, she uses the same violence against her oppressors. This visceral encounter with Macho-feudalism allows her to take a step towards its abolishment.

Conclusion

Oppression is a process that exists in a systematic pyramid structure. It begins with social norms and then expands to deliberate measures of perpetuating dominance (Althusser, 1970; Banyard & McMahon, 2011). In "Generations" (Rosca, 1998), I argue that the household's accumulation of small and cyclical acts mimics the Macho-feudalism that governs the wider society. Because the dominant system attempts to reproduce the conditions that allow it to exist (Althusser, 1970), smaller ideological

units feed the larger political context and vice versa. The male-centeredness of paternal lineages contributes to the justification of detrimental machismo and its institutionalization. The oppressor, like the father and the soldiers, carries with them the proof and symbol of male dominance. From domestic exploitation, militarized systems, and sexual violence, the macho-feudalist system in the Philippines is demonstrated in Rosca's (1998) short story.

As a feminist writer and advocate, Rosca (1998) does not let this narrative run without subverting the woman's *Otherness*. Like the young female protagonist in this short story, my feminist interpretation bares its teeth in the moonlight and faces its oppressors with a counter-narrative. When the daughter symbolically castrates the father through her own act of violence, she becomes a symbol of feminine capacity and resistance. Through the radical eye of Rosca (1998), the woman has determined a manner of emancipation that does not accommodate or please the social systems of machismo. The daughter, writer, and reader disturb and discomfort those who insist upon the submissive role of the feminine in the household and society. Through the nameless daughter, the macho-feudalist system is shaken by its base, and masculine-centered meaning is threatened.

References

- Althusser, L. (1970). *Ideology and ideological state apparatuses: Notes towards an investigation* (B. Brewster, Trans.). California State University, Northridge. <http://www.csun.edu/~snk1966/Lous%20Althusser%20Ideology%20and%20Ideological%20State%20Apparatuses.pdf>
- Arong, M. L. & Hempel, D. (2017). Towards a Philippine transnation: Dreaming a Philippines in Ninotchka Rosca's State of War. *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, 48(2), 53-71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/ari.2017.0014>
- Banyard, V. L. & McMahon, S. (2011). Pyramid of discrimination and violence. In V. L. Banyard, & S. McMahon, *When can I help? A conceptual framework for the prevention of sexual violence through bystander intervention* (pp. 3-14). <https://www.adl.org/media/12060/download>
- Davis, R. G. (1999). Postcolonial visions and immigrant longings: Ninotchka Rosca's versions of the Philippines. *World Literature Today*, 73(1), 62-70. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40154476>
- De Manuel, D. (2004). Decolonizing bodies, reinscribing souls in the fiction of Ninotchka Rosca and Linda Ty-Casper. *MELUS*, 29(1), 99-118. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4141797>
- De Vera, R. (2020, April 20). The dark geography of Ninotchka Rosca's 'Bitter Country'. *The Philippine Inquirer*. <https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/361307/the-dark-geography-of-ninotchka-rosca-s-bitter-country/>
- Human Rights Violations Victims' Memorial Commission. (2023, February 21). *VAW spotlight: Women and militarization*. <https://hrvvmemcom.gov.ph/vaw-militarization/>
- Ingoldsby, B. (1991). The Latin American family: Familism vs. machismo. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 22(1), 57-62. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41602120?seq=1>
- Mendible, M. (2012). Literature as activism: Ninotchka Rosca's political aesthetic. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 50(3), 354-367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2012.717513>
- Mijares, P. (1976). *The conjugal dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* [Open Access]. Ateneo de Manila University. <http://rizalls.lib.admu.edu.ph:8080/ebooks2/Primitivo%20Mijares.pdf>
- Morales, E. (2015). *Machismo(s): A cultural history, 1928 - 1984* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan]. University of Michigan Library. <https://search.lib.umich.edu/catalog/record/990139554720106381>
- Ojano, K.D. (2022). Myth, dream, and resistance in Ninotchka Rosca and Emmanuel Lacaba's fictions. *Akda: The Asian Journal of Literature, Culture, Performance*, 2(1), 19-33. <https://doi.org/10.59588/2782-8875.1029>
- Prado, L.A. (2005). *Patriarchy and machismo: Political, economic and social effects on women*. California State University. <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3640&context=etd-project>
- Rizal, J. (1912). *The reign of greed: A complete English version of El Filibusterimo from the Spanish of Jose Rizal* [C. Derbyshire, Trans.]. Philippine Education Company. (Original work published in 1891)
- Rodriguez, L. L. (1990). Patriarchy and women's subordination in the Philippines. *Review of Women's Studies*, 1(1), 15-25. <https://www.journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/rws/article/view/3248/>
- Rosca, N. (1998). Generations. In G. Abad, R. De Ungria, & J. N. Garcia (Eds.), *The Likhaan Anthology of Philippine Literature in English from 1900 to the Present* (pp. 297-306). University of the Philippines Press.
- Sipchen, B. (1988, July 8). Novelist 'celebrates' the painful absurdities of life in her native Philippines. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-07-08-vw-6807-story.html>
- Staszak, J.F. (2008). *Other/otherness*. Université de Genève. <https://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/geo/files/3214/4464/7634/OtherOtherness.pdf>
- Watson, J. K. (2017). Stories of the state: Literary form and authoritarianism in Ninotchka Rosca's State of War. *Contemporary Literature*, 58(2), 262-289. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26529508>