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VOL 9 NO 2 (2015):

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/ Article

## Hunger, Desire and Migratory Souls: Interethnic Relations in Three Short Stories by Satur P. Apoyon

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**ABSTRACT** Modern Cebuano fiction comes from an oral tradition that goes back to pre-colonial Philippines. An important shift in the

direction of Cebuano literature took place after the Pacific War when Visayan communities had been firmly established in Mindanao. Migration created an audience outside of Cebu and, consequently, encouraged writing that depicted the migrant's life. In turn, realities that spring from the history and cultures of Mindanao came to be represented in Cebuano fiction with relative care and integrity. Satur P. Apoyon was among the Visayan writers who consciously sought to describe realities in Mindanao using a Cebuano literary tradition.

This essay examines three short stories from Apoyon's *Ang Gakit Ni Noebong Ug Ubang Mga Sugilanon* (Noebong's Raft and Other Stories). These stories feature interethnic relations between a Visayan and a Bagobo in "Dili Alang Kang David Ang Baboy Ihalas" (The Wild Boar is Not for David) and a Maguindanao and a Teduray in "Ang Jihad ni Hadji Aribani" (Hadji Aribani's Jihad). "Mga Gutom" (The Hungry Ones) describes a symbolic relationship between human and animal that portrays an analogous dynamic found in the stories about settlers and the indigenous.

This essay will employ Resil B. Mojares's concept of the Filipino writer's wandering soul ("The Haunting of the Filipino Writer" 300) to describe a trauma that Apoyon's fiction repeatedly re-enacts in the form of encounters between characters from different ethnic groups. Using Mojares's lens, the three stories will be read as being "haunted" by the spectre of the Lumad: the indigenous peoples of Mindanao whom migrants from Luzon and the Visayas had displaced after waves of migration that occurred during the American colonial period.

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John Barrera Bengan teaches writing and literature at the University of the Philippines Mindanao. His work has appeared in the *Philippines Free Press*, *Davao Harvest 2*, *Likhaan Journal 6: The Journal of Contemporary Philippine Literature*, *Hoard of Thunder*, *Kritika Kultura* and *The Brooklyn Rail*. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from The New School in New York City. He has won prizes from the Philippines Free Press Literary Awards and the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for his fiction. He lives in Davao City.

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## SECTION

Article

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The stories published here were largely written in the three decades following the First World War. Although Maugham had written short stories early in his career, preoccupation with his other writing led to a long interval before he next took up the form, on a voyage in the South Seas in 1919, originally as a relief from other work. It is consequently an irony which he would have appreciated that many consider him to be at his best in his short stories. A good part of the success of his stories derives from the technique that Maugham used. He discussed this in the preface to the

