SASAKI, SARINA

HUM170

The *Tunay, Palaban, Makabayan* spirit of the University of the Philippines- Los Banos is perceptible in its collective endeavor for social transformation. Once in a while, we would see students joining together for a movement, screaming their hearts out in front of the Humanities Building, in the middle of the Oblation Park or Carabao Park. Sometimes there are papers that are passed around during classes for signature campaigns, and boycotting of classes to protest against the Large Lecture Class Policy.

Ironic as it may sound, in this science-based community, art is also used as a medium for protests and propagandas. Theatre is one art form that is vastly used as a medium in this University. With all the available and possible performance spaces that the University has, there is no question why there are different theatre groups formed in the campus. In a semester, the University holds two or more stage plays mounted by these groups in different areas in UPLB, sometimes in unexpected spaces and in an unexpected manner.

One prominent cultural group in the campus that continues to mount meaningful productions is the *Umalohokan, Inc.* *“Umalohokan”* means “town crier”, the announcer for the new laws and policies that the *Datu* imposes in the ancient Philippine *barangay.* (Agoncillo et al., 1970) The group is subdivided into three divisions: *Teatro*- for theatre practitioners, *Himig-* for musicians, and *Pintados-* for the visual artists. Established in December 1977, the Martial Law era, a number of students and professors formed this organization that would enlighten the public of the social and political situation of the University and of the Philippine country through the arts. It is also said that the organization was formed “as an attempt to use theatre as a vehicle for reflecting contemporary ordinary life.” (Pison, 2009) Their most popular and sustaining production, the *Isko’t Iska* has been showing every year for free since 1979. *Isko’t Iska* is a production “performed by freshmen for the freshmen”. It tackles mostly the issues in the University, the UP System, and the life of the students in the campus.

Art as a medium for propaganda or art propaganda is by far the most effective way to convey message to the members of the University. As John Dewey said, “Art is the most effective mode of communication that exists.” Arts being singled out and unique from all the mathematics and sciences in the campus, who wouldn’t notice if they make a huge activity in the University that is different from what everybody got used to everyday? The curiosity of many will lead them to watch and witness the performances or exhibits- activities that are not usual in their environment. Now curiosity or boredom from their routinary scientific and mathematical lives got them to watch or see. The performance or exhibit becomes an opportunity for the performers to communicate their message. Art is one medium that can universally communicate, surpassing language or cultural differences. Theatre is one form of art that can express, and also entertain, in the most realistic form.

Unknown to many, UPLB produced great names in the theatre arts discipline. Antonio Mabesa, an Agriculture graduate in the University, is a respected mentor, actor, and director in theatre. Dr. Leo Rimando is another product of UPLB, also a known director and playwright. In the most present generation, we have Sue Prado, one prominent independent film and stage actress, and Yanah Laurel, a very promising professional theatre actress. These are a few among many other artists that the University has produced despite its lack of faith and support for the potentials of the struggling artists in UPLB.

Since the University supports mainly everything that is leaning towards science, the arts have been left far behind, getting lesser support than it should equally have. Most student artists are oppressed from their right to use the facilities for rehearsals and performances for free, from getting support and finance for the advancement of the arts. There are more issues that the majority is not aware of, and most are left unresolved. There were attempts to address some concerns to the administration, like the professorial lecture of Professor Jerry R. Yapo and Professor Dulcinea R. Laforteza entitled *The Culture-Arts Interface: Strengthening Culture through the Arts in UP Los Banos* in 2010. Since the art is not a priority then again in this University, no concrete action was made even after this professorial lecture.Despite these circumstances, the *Tunay, Palaban, Makabayan* artists of UPLB continue to put up productions after productions, working with what they have to improve and keep the theatre alive in the University.

It can be said that the mounting of theatre productions is a form of propaganda itself. As the people of theatre and their productions in the University thrive and gain popularity even outside the campus, there comes an attempt to reconstruct the perception of the people on the science-based community. These challenge the administration to take some actions, acknowledge, and support the existence of the arts in the University.

REFERENCES:

 Agoncillo, Teodoro A., Alfonso, Oscar M., & Guerrero, Milagros. (1970). *History of the Filipino People.* Quezon City, MM: Malaya Books

Chaudhary, Supriya. (1998). *Developmental Values in a Cultural Organisation: The Case of Umalohokan Incorporated.* UPLB: Main Library

Fernandez, Jean Claire C., Laforteza, Dulcinea R., Yapo, Jerry R. (13 December 2010). *THE CULTURE-ARTS INTERFACE:Strengthening Culture through the Arts in UP Los Banos.* UPLB: Main Library

Mattern, Mark. (February 1999). *John Dewey, Art and Public Life: The Journal of Politics.* Vol. 61 No. 1. University of Chicago Press

Pison, Jordana L. (September- October 2009). *The World as a Stage: The Stage as World*. The UP Forum. Vol. 10 No. 5.