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## PNoy and our alphabet soup of concerns

Thursday, 29 July 2010 12:00 AM | Libay Linsangan Cantor

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pnoy1 for poc



It's a given that Filipinos love using titles, abbreviations and acronyms. By titles, I mean calling someone not by their given names but their title or status in society or in their work. For example, you always hear people calling doctors "dok" (doc to shorten doctor) or lawyers are addressed as "atorni" (attorney) and the professionals' given names are not attached to their titles. Sometimes, this penchant for using titles and abbreviations join together, as I heard someone once address a lawyer as "Uy, si A-T-T-Y!" meaning she is spelling out the abbreviation or shortened title of the person who is a lawyer.

So with our love for titles, abbreviations and acronyms, it's normal that we continue with that practice with this new government administration. For instance, didn't you notice that finding a nickname for the new president was one of the "major" concerns of some sectors? To differentiate the past president from a TV network, she was labeled as **PGMA** (as opposed to using her initials as GMA which she shares with a [known media station](#)). Thus, with **President Benigno Aquino III**, people attached this "cute" moniker "PNoy" to refer to him, a kind of wordplay to the informal term for Filipino which is **Pinoy**. Perhaps calling him "Noynoy" is too informal, or maybe they fear it won't sit well with English-speaking people who have always found this Filipino name repetition as rather boggling (remember that Filipino elevator conversation anecdote where only one syllable was used, yet the speakers understood each other, to the bafflement of the foreigners? "Bababa ba?" "Bababa."). So okay, we call him PNoy.

There's another acronym that Filipinos have been throwing around a lot these days, since it just finished – PNoy's latest **SONA**, or state of the nation address, which he gave during the joint session of the Senate and Congress last July 26. Many sectors were a bit uneasy because in his speech, PNoy seemed to have left out a lot of issues that belonged in a lot of people's alphabet soup of concerns. Some acronyms people were waiting for were things like RH, HR and **CARP** – that's reproductive health, human rights, and the comprehensive agrarian reform program or its newer form CARPER (or CARP extension with reforms). Well, there was a bit of HR mentioned there but RH and CARP or CARPER were nowhere to be found or heard, irking the sectors who have been fighting for agrarian reform and the plight of poor farmers of this land.

I was particularly waiting for RH and HR, too, since these are two of the ingredients in my own alphabet soup of concerns. I was particularly waiting for his stand on the controversial [reproductive health bill](#), a bill that will solve a lot of pressing problems the Philippines is facing right now such as the scary population boom that never seems to end, and the access to proper contraceptives. I can't believe we're still in this stage when RH advocates from other countries have long progressed in this discussion, as they automatically give their citizens—especially the women—the reproductive health protection and education they need. But alas, enemies of this RH bill have labeled the bill as merely a "pro-abortion" bill – even if they haven't read the darn bill in whole. Judgmental much? Scary, isn't it, to fight against an enemy who doesn't know what's up in the battle. To borrow author **Chuck Palahniuk's** words, stupid isn't the word, but it's the first word that comes to mind.

Attached to this RH issue is the [current hot topic](#) of the country: introducing sex education to the basic curriculum of

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schools. It's high time the Department of Education did this, because if they look at the population of young people getting pregnant, it's scary that many pre-teens are getting pregnant these days. I've heard of at least four or five 13-year-olds who were impregnated just this past year. Imagine that. Obviously, their parents are still so scared of the Catholic Church's teachings so they don't teach sexuality stuff to their children. I guess they leave it up to the schools to do that job, but could the schools do this if they don't have it in their curriculum? Chicken and egg, folks.

So why am I looking at this RH issue? This is because it's the cousin of my main alphabet soup of concern – the **LGBT** agenda. As an LGBT advocate, I have always looked at how officials have been viewing the concerns that pertain to women, since this will be a good gauge of how officials would also see and discuss concerns pertaining to LGBTs. I guess we are both under the umbrella concern of the **marginalized sectors**, marginalized based on who you are; for them, marginalized for being a woman, and for us, marginalized for being beyond a woman – being a woman, and a woman-loving-woman or a lesbian. I am hoping that when the RH issue is resolved and the RH bill is championed, then next in line would be the LGBT concern. It was good that **Ang Ladlad** was able to put forth some of the LGBT issues and concerns in this past election season. Even if the group didn't win seats in Congress, its concrete representation of the LGBT people was enough to let Philippine society know that we LGBTs are also citizens of this country, and therefore—like every other citizen of this land—we should also have a say on things that concern us and govern us, so people should also listen to us. Decades ago, it's the women's movement that carried such similar plights. Now, it's our turn. But with PNoy's non-pronouncements of our alphabet soup of concerns, I guess it's back to lumping it as "our concerns" – both the women's and the LGBT community's concerns.

But all is not lost. It's still too early to tell whether the new leadership has teeth or if they're merely hiding their bite. I haven't heard PNoy speak about LGBT rights and concerns concretely and openly, but that doesn't mean that he won't, too. Right? Well, let's hope so. Let's hope that with his next 100 days, he could already get a taste of what needs to be fixed in the country's kitchen, and here's hoping that he sips from our soup so he'll know how to serve us better.

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