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### Things We Can't Say

In Mieko Kawakami's article, a Japanese novelist, "*Why get upset when you can just smile?*," questions if Art can unbound the chains of Japan's pressure to conform function at its lowest. Kawakami suggests that art allows for a different and nonconformist opinion that differentiates itself from the public view. Additionally, Kawakami implies that art is allowing an individual to break their chains of traditions which should be valued. In all, art is important because it expands an individual's knowledge on other judgments and beliefs that they may have never come across to figure out for themselves.

Furthermore, Juan Luna, an artist in the Philippines, further illustrates Kawakami's claim in his works: *Spoliarium* (1864), *Blood Compact* (1886), and *Tampuhan* (1895). Notably, Luna



Fig. 1. Luna, Juan. *Spoliarium*. 1884. Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spoliarium>

Henceforth, these ideals are represented in Luna's painting, *Spoliarium* (see fig. 1). Luna amplifies the people that are being dragged by using bright colors which creates a focal point. Plus, Luna produces movement from going left to right by his usage of lines that the people are being dragged towards the right and everyone is facing the opposite direction from the viewer. Hence, Luna fabricates a sense of normality as there is dead space where the light shines upon the floor with blood. The repetition showcased in this artwork represents the indifference that others in the area have been desensitized; such as the person sitting on the right side of the painting and those in the background. The proportion of the figures that seem dismantled are emphasizing the wounded people.



Fig. 2. Luna, Juan. *Blood Compact*. 1886. Wikipedia,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood\\_compact](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_compact)

Similarly to *Spoliarium*, Luna's painting, *Blood compact* (see fig. 2) also suggests the symbolism in Philippine culture that impacted the historical lives of citizens in the Philippines. The dark ambience that Luna creates by using the color black to eliminate any possible background knowledge which evokes a sense of uncertainty. In addition, he emphasizes a focal point in the middle of the drawing by contrasting the color of the letter from the rest of the

painting, which represents the equality that the Philippines wishes to show from Spain.

Henceforth, the movement of the painting draws the viewer towards the left side of the painting because all of the characters are looking toward that direction; a viewer can infer the person on the left a symbolism of leadership or guidance as such. Also, Luna uses shapes to represent the historical origin and significance of the event, “Pacto de Sangre,” which originated from the Spanish and Natives. In which, the cup that the man is holding represents the lives of those affected by the deal; the entire Philippine community.



Fig. 3. Luna, Juan. *Tampuhan*. 1895. Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tampuhan\\_\(painting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tampuhan_(painting))

Distinctively from the previous paintings, Luna portrays the coexistence between Philippine culture and Spanish culture in *Tampuhan* (see fig. 3). Luna attempts to convince Spaniards that will view his artwork to also view Filipinos as elegant and sophisticated. He uses warm colors to create unity in his painting, which invokes a sense of comfortability and showcases that the vitality of life is sensible and standard for Filipinos. Plus, Luna creates proportion between the two characters; sharpening the appearance of the woman rather than the

man who is looking away from the viewer. Luna's stylistic creation supports the ideology of balance and tranquility between the characters; especially the woman dancing allures the viewer as angelic or majestic.

In all, Luna uses his paintings to convey the importance of convincing one's mind or enlightening one's mind with a contrasting viewpoint. Furthermore, Kawakami and Luna create a consensus that art allows an individual to open their eyes to a different perspective which creates a new ideal that was previously shutdown or unbeknownst to others. Lastly, art expresses the freedom of those narrow mindness to explore new boundaries and express their new knowledge.

Works Cited

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