



NEW PLAY WORKSHOP

“PEOPLE SITTING IN DARKNESS”

Playwright’s Note:

“Shall we go on conferring our Civilization upon the peoples that sit in darkness, or shall we give those poor things a rest?” –Mark Twain, 1901.

The Spanish-American War ended in 1898, resulting in the handover of the Philippines, which had been a colony of Spain for more than 300 years, to the United States of America. The US government saw in the islands an opportunity to spread its democratic values, through free public education and modern governmental institutions. The transfer of power did not go unchallenged—a brutal war between American forces and Filipino nationalists soon erupted, causing hundreds of thousands of deaths. This was America’s first experience with overseas nation-building: putting down an insurrection while simultaneously promoting democracy. Mark Twain, suspicious of America’s supposed benevolence, wrote the satirical essay “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” as a response, condemning the colonial adventure. The United States finally recognized the Philippines as an independent nation in 1946.

My play is set in 1901, the first year America sent civilian teachers to the Philippines.

-Clarence Coo

READING OF “PEOPLE SITTING IN DARKNESS”

written by Clarence Coo
directed by Desdemona Chiang

Cast:

*Don Teodoro/Obik.....*Ben Gonio
*Doña Josefa/Tutuya.....*Anna Saephan
*Isabel.....*Ai Nguyen
*Rogelio.....*Kevin Lin
*Magdalena.....*Hazel Lozano
*Nestor.....*Simon Tran
*Edmund.....*Michael Cruz

The School of Drama New Play Workshop series is a celebration of new work and new voices in the American theatre. Each play in the series will be workshopped for 7-9 days with UW Drama students and guest artists. At the end of the process, each play is presented in the form of a public reading.