

THE ETHNIC TRADITION

The Filipino's earliest ancestors travelled to the Islands from other points of Asia and Southeast Asia. They migrated by land or by sea on boats known today as *barangay*. They settled in caves like those of Palawan, and in time dispersed to other places in the Archipelago, settling in villages lining the coasts of bays and seas, the shores of lakes, or the banks of rivers. They also settled in mountains and valleys all over the archipelago.

The Aeta were the first to arrive about 30,000 years ago. They lived in the lowland coastal areas until successive migration wars with the Malay drove them farther and farther inland and into the mountains. Over the centuries the Malay groups took over the different parts of the archipelago and became known as the Ivatan in Batanes; the Tinguian, Ibaloy, Kankanay, Bontoc, Kalinga, and Isneg of the Cordilleras; the Gaddang, Isinai, Itawes, Ibanag, and Ilongo in the Caraballo and adjacent areas; the Mangyan of Mindoro; the Tagbanua of Palawan; the Tausug, Samal, Badjao, Yakan, and Jama Mapun of the Sulu Areas; the Maguindanao, Maranao, Manobo, Bagobo, Bukidnon, Tboli, Subanon, and other related groups in Mindanao; and the largest groups of all: the Ilocano, Pangasinan, Pampango, Tagalog, Bicol, Cebuano, Waray, and Ilongo. The Maguindanao, Maranao, Tausug, and other Mindanao groups were Islamized in the late 14th century, as were the Tagalog. At the Spanish advent, however, the Tagalog together with the Ilocano, Pangasinan, Pampango, Bicol, and the Visayan groups were Christianized.

The literary tradition among indigenous Philippine groups was mostly oral. A problem, therefore, arises when one attempts to study the samples of this oral literature, especially before the 16th century, since the recording of this literature was done by the Spanish colonizers only from 1521 to the 19th century. Among those who described or gave samples of the early poems, narratives, and songs are Antonio Pigafetta in 1521, Miguel de Loarca in 1582, the *Boxer Codex* circa 1590, Pedro Chirino 1604, Francisco Colin in 1663, and Francisco Alzina in 1668.

During the Spanish period, grammarian-philologists recorded some poems and songs to illustrate usage of words. Among the works with literary texts are Fr. Gaspar de San Agustin's *Compendio del arte de la lengua tagala* (A Compendium of the Grammar of the Tagalog Language), 1703; Fr. Francisco Bencuchillo's *Arte poetica tagala* (The Art of Tagalog Poetry), written circa 1775 and published in 1895; Fr. Juan de Noceda and Fr. Pedro de San Lucar's *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala* (Vocabulary of the Tagalog Language), 1754 and 1869; and Fr. Joaquin de Coria's *Nueva gramatica tagalog teoretica-practica* (New Theoretical-Practical Tagalog Grammar), 1872. These and many others written in other Philippine languages like, Pampango, Cebuano, and Ilocano had the additional merit of recording for posterity the traditional poetics. For example, Fr. Alonso de Mentrída's *Arte de la lengua bisaya-hiligayna de la isla*

de Panay (Art of the Bisaya-Hiligaynon Language of the Island of Panay), 1618 and 1894, contains a “Lista de varios refranes” (List of Various Proverbs) and a treatise on poesia bisaya or Visayan poetry (Manuel 1986:387-401).

Through more than three centuries of Spain’s colonization and four decades of American rule, many European and American literary introduced into the country were adopted and adapted by native writers, especially by those who were educated in Westernized schools. The advent of these Western forms, however, did not necessarily lead to the obliteration of indigenous literature. The wisdom and learning of elders continued to be passed down orally through the generations, reflecting the people’s reaction to changing realities of society under foreign domination.

Today, these indigenous forms continue to live not only among those cultural communities hardly touched by Westernization, but even among lowland Christian Filipinos, especially those in rural communities. As documented by Spanish chroniclers and philologists from 1521 to 1898, American anthropologists from 1901 to the present, and Filipino anthropologists and literary scholars in the past century, ethnic literature created by the ordinary folk in the oral tradition may be classed into folk speech, folk songs, epics, and folk narratives.

Folk Speech

The shortest forms of folk literature, called folk speech, consist of riddles, proverbs, and short poems. Known as *bugtong* in Tagalog and Pampango, *tigmo* in Cebuano, *burburti* in Ilocano, *tugma* in Ilongo, *kabbuñi* in Ivatan, and *tukudtukud* in Tausug, the riddle is a traditional expression using one or more images that refer to an object that has to be guessed. Riddles flex one’s wits, sharpening perception and the capacity to recognize similarities and contrasts. They are also occasions for humor and entertainment. Images from nature or from the material culture of the community may be used as metaphor or object to be guessed. Riddles may come in one, two, three, or four lines. There is no set meter although there is palpable rhythm. Rime tends to be assonantal.

This Subanon riddle (Eugenio 1982:419) sensitizes listeners to the natural world around them:

*Kayo sa Canoojong,
bagyohon dili mapalong. (Aninipot)*

The fire of Burawen
can never be put out by hurricane. (Firefly)

This Cebuano *tigmo* sharpens the wit by confronting the listener with a paradox:

*Han bata pa nagbabado,
Han bagas na, naghuhubo. (Kawayan)*

Dressed when young,
Naked when old. (Bamboo)

A proverb has didactic value. Known as *salawikain* in Tagalog, *kasabian* in Pampango, *sanglitanan* in Cebuano, *pagsasao* in Ilocano, *hurubatan* in Ilongo, *pananahan* in Ivatan, and *masaalla* in Tausug, it uses a metaphor derived from nature or daily life, this time to refer not to an object but to a truth that can apply to different situations in life. In form it is similar to the riddle. This Ilocano *pagsasao* or proverb underscores the importance of vigilance, using an image familiar to fisherfolk:

*Iyanud tidanunti
Matmaturog nga udang.*

Water carries away
the sleeping shrimp.

This Pampango *diparan* (Hilario-Lacson 1984:21) warns that what looks soft and easy is what binds together.

*Ing silung malambut
Matalik ya igut.*

A soft lasso
Has a tight pull.

This Bicol *sasabihon* (Galdon 1980:166) points out that one who is afraid will never achieve anything:

An matakot sa doronDaing aanihon.

One who is afraid of locusts
Will never harvest anything.

Among the short poems, the *tanaga* is most documented. This is a heptasyllabic quatrain or a stanza of four lines with seven syllables per line. It uses a *talinghaga* or metaphor taken from a person's environment to express human experience. This Tagalog *tanaga* illustrates the folly of excessive ambition with the *talinghaga* of a hill trying to be a mountain:

*Mataas man ang bondoc
mantay man sa bacouor
iyamang mapagtaloc,
sa pantay rin aanod.*

Though the hill be high
and reach up to the highland,
being desirous of heights,
it will finally be reduced to flat land.

Folk Songs and Ballads

Songs created by the folk may be divided into the lyric or situational, which emphasizes expression of thought or emotion, and the narrative, which tells a sequence of events. Songs are chanted solo, chorally, or antiphonally, in the home or in large feasts at the village circle. The song is called *awit* in Tagalog, Pampango, Cebuano, and Folk lyrics consist of the lullaby, songs of love and courtship, wedding songs, dirges for the dead, and the occasional songs for working and drinking.

The lullaby puts infants to sleep with its languid tunes and repetitive lyrics. Most lullabies are whimsical and fanciful, but some are serious and didactic, like this Tagalog *uyayi* (Eugenio 1982:430-431):

*Kung lumaki't magkaisipikaw bunso'y magbabait
mag-aaral na masakit
ng kabanalang malinis.*

When you grow up be good, my child persevere in learning to be clean and holy.

Love between man and woman occasioned exquisite poetry, but friar-philologists of the time were averse to propagating it. Hence, little of it is available in friar records.

It is from recordings of 20th-century ethnography that sample texts of surviving traditions were obtained. The *ambahan* of the Hanunoo Mangyan of the Mindoro islands is an exchange of verses chanted by a man and a woman to each other, as illustrated by this excerpt from the collection/ translations of Antoon Postma (1972:51-55):

*Salod anong bugtungan
Kis-ab kang mag-iginan
Ginan kang tipit lingban
Bunggo madi uyunan
Kang di tinalisigan
Kang bay nga pagsumayan
Padi man ga bungguan
Una sa unay kagnan
Una babaw aghuman
Kang ka-abay sag lan-gan
Ka-ugbay sag ranukan.*

My sweetheart, my love so dear, when I left, in coming here, coming from my house and yard, all the rice that I have stored, I have left it there behind, because I hope here to find one more valued than my rice! One to be my partner, nice to the water, to the field, a companion in my trips, and one who will share my sleep.

But the girl is prudent and would wish to know and test the lover more:

*Umraw anong awayan
Saysay mamaukaynan
Mama-ukayno duyan
Sarin ka pag mangginan
Mangidungon aw kaywan
Mamaybay aw banasan
No sis indungon kaywan
Ya ngap urog nga ginan
Sinya singko da-uyan
Ha panulos tarn lan-gan
Halaw sis pangulinan.*

My dear boy, as bamboo straight, may I ask you something now, just one question I will say: tell me, please, where are you from? Are you from the mountain slopes or do you live at the shore? If the mountains are your home, well, that is to me, all right. You are welcome in this place. But if you are going home, you had better leave me here!

The ambahan is primarily sung but it may also be written, or more accurately, etched on bamboo node or a flat bamboo strip with a sharp iron blade in the old Hanunoo Mangyan script.

Wedding songs among the Christianized groups reveal Spanish influence, although the context and message of the songs hark back to an older precolonial tradition (Eugenio 1982: 452-453):

*Adyos Nanay, adyos Tatay
Tapos na ang inyong pagbantay
Mana-ug ko sa hinay hinay
Mangita ko ug laing Nanay.*

*Makabana gani'g maayo
Maayo sab akong pagbantay
Makabana ug abobhoan
Adlaw gabii hibokbokan.*

Goodbye, Mother; goodbye, Father
Your responsibilities are over
I will go down very slowly
To find a new mother.

If I marry a good man
My life will be well taken care of
If I marry a jealous man
Then day and night I'll be beaten.

Collective work also inspired songs. Rice planting and other activities were occasions for musical poetry. The Ivatan sang their *kalusan* while clearing their farms or when rowing their boats. Driving the rowers to pull hard together, they sang (Hornedo 1979: 345 ff.):

*Un as kayaluhén, kakaluhén
Un si payawari, parinin,
Un nu akma diwiyaten.
Un as payawa, paypisahen;
Un as payawa, palangen,
Un si wayayat mo nay.*

Yes, let us hurry, let us hurry then.
Yes, we pull the oars with rhythm, so let it be.
Yes, let it be by rowers like us.
Yes, we pull the oars with rhythm, for once let it be.
Yes, we pull the oars with rhythm, let us pull.
Yes, the oars, your very oars now.

This Tagalog *awit* describes the difficulties of a fisher's life (Eugenio 1982:453):

*Ang mangingisda't anong hiras
Maghulog bumatak ng lambat
Laging basa ng tubig dagat
Pagal at puyat magdamag.*

How hard it is to be a fisher
to cast the net and pull it back,
always wet with sea water,
tired and sleepless the whole night.

Often the folk get together for a few rounds of drinks to relax. These are their occasions for singing and making merry. An example of a drinking song is this *tagay* from Cebu (Eugenio 1982:459):

*Ay, Liding, Liding, Liding,
Ay, Liding, Liding, Liding,
Uhaw tagay.
Uhaw tagay.*

*Kon walay sumsuman,
Ihawan ang hinuktan.
Uhaw tagay
Uhaw tagay.*

Ay, Liding, Liding, Liding,
Ay, Liding, Liding, Liding,
I am thirsty; let us drink.
I am thirsty; let us drink.

If there is no *sumsuman*
Kill the *hinuktan*
I am thirsty; let us drink.
I am thirsty; let us drink.

Songs had always been part of the tribal rituals for the dead. When a person died, the community held extended funerals, at which poems of lamentation, such as the Ilocano *dung-aw* today, and the narrative of the dead person's life were chanted for several nights. This dirge from Sagada is sung during the wake when the body in state is tied to the *sangadil* or death chair (Eugenio 1982:165-168):

*Id cano sangasangadom,
 wada's inan-Talangey ay bayaw ay nasakit,
 ay isnan nadnenadney
 San bebsat inan-Talangey, maid egay dda iyey
 Bayaw issan masakit, ay si inan-Talangey
 Sa't ikikidana dapay anocan nakingey
 Wada pay omanono ay daet obpay matey.
 San Nakwas ay nadiko, ay ba'w si inan-Talangey
 Dadaet isangadil, issan sag-en san tetey
 Da't san ab-abiik na napika et ay omey
 Bayawan ay manateng ab'abiik di natey
 Aydaet
 mailokoy si'n anito'y sinkaweywey
 Nan danen daet mattao bayaw ya mabaginey.*

A long time ago, it is said, there was Inan Talangey
 Who had been sick for a long time
 The brothers and sisters of Inan Talangey,
 they did not bring
 To the sick who was Inan Talangey
 But she was lying in bed and yet was very fussy
 And at length she finally died.
 After she died, she Inan Talangey
 They tied her to the death chair near the ladder
 Then her soul started to go
 To join the souls of the dead
 She went with a long line of anitos
 Their path was grassy and among the *mabaginey*.

Narrative songs are represented by the ballads and the epic (the latter to be treated in a separate section). The ballads narrated particular episodes or events, whereas the much larger epic was a series of ballads about the many exploits of one hero or a set of heroes.

The poetic narrative of the ***Parang Sabil*** of Sulu narrates the heroic self-immolation of Muslims who wished to die as witnesses to their faith and be borne into heaven by a white stallion. Outstanding among these narratives is the Tausug ***Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Puti Isara in Spanish Times***.

Similar to the ***Parang Sabil*** are ballads or folk hero stories in chanted poetry from the Amburayan-Bakun river valleys on the western sub-Cordillera in the Ilocos inland, like the ***Allusan***, the ***Da Delnagen ken Annusan Lumawig***, and the legend of Indayuan on the founding of the town of Sugpon by the Amburayan River between Ilocos Sur and La Union in northwestern Luzon.

Called a *sarita* (story), the *Indayuan*, which comes from an inland culture called Bag-o, is sung in the musical chant style called *baguyos*, which is used for singing hero stories. The story purports to be about the lovely Indayuan, but it eventually gets caught up in the history of an exodus of groups of refugees.

Towards the end, the story tells about how Sugpon got its name, with the accent shifted to the cooperation and mutual help or *sugpon*, through which the town was founded. Although it does not unfold chronologically, the story nevertheless is clearly about the flight of a people from oppression in order to find a better way of life, free according to their own fashion.

The ballad is also found among lowland Christian groups. It is usually a narrative poem in short stanzas that are sung in an unvarying melody. It lives in songs like the Cebuano *daygon* and Waray *panarit*, which narrates various episodes of the birth of Christ, including the adoration of the Magi; the Tagalog *pangangaluluwa*, which tells of a beggar (Christ in disguise) asking for shelter for a night and leaving money with the kind host; the *composo*, usually about an actual event either of historical significance or with a melodramatic content.

Ballads too were the *awit* and *korido*, called thus in Tagalog, Cebuano, and , *panagbiag* in Ilocano, *impanbilay* in Pangasinan, and *kuriru* in Pampango. These were metrical romances chanted in private or in gatherings and which narrated the exploits of a particular person, although now the concentration is on European medieval personalities.

The Epics

The ethnoepics are the longest narrative poems of the Philippines. E. Arsenio Manuel (1963:3) defines them as narratives of sustained length, based on oral tradition, revolving around supernatural events or heroic deeds, and embodying or validating the beliefs, customs, ideals, or life values of an ethnic group. The epic heroes are depicted as possessing extraordinary physical and supernatural powers. The various local terms for epic mean song/singing or chant/chanting, like the *dalagangan*, the *Ifugao hudhud*, the Subanon *guman*, the Maguindanao and Maranao *darangen*, the *Mansaka diawot*, the Manobo *owaging*, *ulaging*, *ulahingan*, or *ulahingan*.

One of the most famous folk epics is the Ilocano ***Biag ni Lam-ang*** (Life of Lam-ang). It relates the extraordinary adventures of Lam-ang, the hero of the epic. He is endowed with supernatural strength, and, has the power of speech at birth. At nine months he asks permission to search for his father, who he later learns was killed and beheaded by the *Igorot*. He engages the *Igorot* in a spectacular battle where he slays every single enemy. He falls in love with the beautiful Ines and after many ordeals marries her in a ceremony of unmatched splendor. The time comes when he has to catch the *rarang* fish. In the struggle he is swallowed by the *berkakan* fish. His bones are recovered and after Ines covers them with her *tapis*, Lam-ang magically springs back to life. He and Ines live happily ever after (Foronda 1978:1506-1512). The epic shows Spanish influences in the names of characters and the customs and objects mentioned.

The Ifugao *Hudhud* is chanted during important social festivities, like the harvest and weeding seasons, marriage feasts, or the wake of an important community leader. The hudhud has many versions, all centering on the exploits of the hero Aliguyon. He seeks the enemy of his ancestors to earn more glory for himself, his comrades, and his tribe. All versions mirror the simple, unadorned life of these mountain people and affirm the theme of self-preservation and continuity of the tribe. Always these epics legitimize tribal customs and the power of the leaders.

From Panay island comes the *Hinilawod*, of which a part called *Labaw Donggon* has a printed version consisting of 2,325 lines. The hero Labaw Donggon is a semidivine being, one of three sons of a *diwata* or goddess and her mortal husband. Not long after his birth he grows up into a strong, handsome young man. The epic is an account of his three incredible amorous adventures. First he courts and marries Ginbitinan; soon after the wedding, he falls in love with Anggoy Doronoon of the underworld and marries her. Not long after, he again desires another woman, Malitung Yawa Sinagmaling Diwata, who lives where the sun rises. She is the wife of Saragnayan, who is in charge of the course of the sun. After learning of Labaw Donggon's intention, Saragnayan tells him that he can have Sinagmaling only when he is dead. Saragnayan's life is kept inside the body of a pig, so no matter what Labaw Donggon does he cannot kill Saragnayan. Labaw Donggon keeps Saragnayan under water for seven years and later beats him up with coconut trunks but to no avail. After many years of fierce fighting, Labaw Donggon is subdued, bound, and thrown into a pig pen. His sons by his first two wives go searching for him and rescue him. With the help of their grandmother, they find the wild boar that contains Saragnayan's life. They kill the boar and eat its heart. Saragnayan weakens. He is defeated and dies. Sinagmaling becomes Labaw Donggon's wife. Labaw Donggon promises to love his three wives equally and they all live happily and peacefully together (Eugenio 1982:104-107).

The *Olaging* of the Bukidnon is about the Battle of Nalandangan and the invincible hero Agyu. It is the story of a people's pride in their homeland, which they share with divinities, and their great *kaamulan* or merrymaking festivals in which they celebrate themselves and their heroes, the greatest of whom is Agyu. Despite casualties, they win the battle. Another great merrymaking takes place, a celebration so glorious that even Agyu's dead father returns as a ghost to be part of the celebration. A female hero is Matabagka, Agyu's sister. She successfully fends off forces about to invade Nalandangan, their fortress, at a time when it is most vulnerable because the men have gone off on a sea expedition.

Among the many epics now in print in their original texts and in translation are the *Ullalim* of the Kalinga; the *Hudhud* of the Ifugao; the *Lam-ang* of the Ilocano; the *Labaw Donggon* of the Sulod; the *Kudaman* of Palawan; the *Darangen* of the Maranao; the *Raja Madaya* of the Maguindanao; the *Agyu* of the Ilianon and the Bukidnon; the *Ulahingan* of the *Livunganen-Arumanen*; the *Tuwaang* of the Manuvu; the *Sandayo* and the *Keboklagan* of the Subanon; and the *Parang Sabil*

of the Tausug.

Folk Narratives

The narratives created by the folk are stories in prose. Called *alamat* or *kuwentong bayan* in Tagalog, *alamat* in Pampango, *kasugiran* in Cebuano, *sarita* in Ilocano, *gintunaan* or *sugilanon* in Ilongo, *kabbata* or *istorya* in Ivatan, and *kissa* in Tausug, these stories are handed down by word of mouth through the generations. They include myths, legends, folktales, and numskull tales.

Myths are narratives believed by the societies that created them to be true accounts of events that happened in ancient times. They are used to explain the way things are in the world. They accompany ritual and are thus considered sacred. Generally, myths are of two spheres: one inhabited by visible beings and the other by invisible beings, who are more powerful than the former. To mediate between these two worlds, *babaylan* or shamans and mediums, who have special gifts, read the messages of the gods from omens and intercede with them for forgiveness and blessings. Occasionally, the *babaylan* propitiate them with offerings or exorcise them.

One of the myths still popular among the Tagalog and Visayan is about the origin of the Islands. According to this myth, there was a big conflict between the sea and the sky. The sea lashed at the sky with its waves, while the sky threw stones at the sea. The stones became the islands. The myth also speaks of the *lawin* (hawk) that pecked a bamboo tree, which broke open, revealing *si babae*, the first woman, and *si lalake*, the first man.

A myth of creation found among the Subanon of Mindanao is that of the great god Diwata who had an only son Demowata. Desiring to become independent, Demowata asked for a home of his own. Diwata took a piece of Heaven and created the earth. Then he drew a circle. Inside the circle was land, and outside was water. Demowata lived on land served by Balag, Diwata's prime minister. The light in the sky, the chain of days and nights, and the creatures of the earth were made for love of Demowata. But he was lonely and needed friends, so Diwata took some clay and fashioned it after the image of his son. But sunlight dried it up and caused it to crack in two equal halves. Le and Lebon, the first man and woman, were born, equal in every way until Balag betrayed his master and seduced the humans. Having been reduced to an eel, Balag contrived to tempt the humans to approach the water, which they had been forbidden to touch. Le and Lebon, creatures of clay, were splashed with water, and their bodies swelled when they got wet. As evil crept into Langkonoyan, the earthly paradise, Diwata considered forgiveness, but not the restoration of original grace. He took his son back into the sky, leaving the humans to eke out a living for themselves on the cursed earth, and to chew betel nut to remind them that life is bitter.

Legends, on the other hand, are stories about heroes and local tales of buried

treasures, enchanters, fairies, ghosts, and saints. If myths are sacred, legends are secular. They are believed to have happened more recently than myths and are regarded as true by their traditional narrators. Legends may be etiological and explain how things came to be, or non-etiological, that is, nonexplanatory, and center on some personage of interest. In the legends of Mariang Makiling of the Tagalog and Maria Cacao of the Cebuano is traceable the historic memory of the race as it passed through the ages of grace as well as exploitation.

The legend of Mariang Makiling is both etiological and non-etiological. This lovely legend, popularized by Rizal, is about a beautiful enchantress whose haunt is Mt Makiling in Laguna. She is not only beautiful; she is also a benefactress to the simple people who live near her mountain, rewarding the good and punishing the wicked. She falls in love with one of the young men there, but he is unfaithful and Maria disappears. With her vanish her blessings, leaving the people in distress (Rizal 1962: 86-92).

From Cebu comes the legend of Maria Cacao, a fairy who owns a vast cacao plantation. She lives in the cave of Lantoy on the mountain of Argao. When the moon is full, she appears to the townspeople. During her travels to America to sell her cacao nuts, she brings back new kitchen and dinnerware. To borrow them, all the townspeople have to do is ask her at the mouth of her cave, and the utensils are delivered to their door the next day without fail.

Maria Cacao uses a golden ship in her travels. The ship is so tall, the bridge of Argao collapses every time she passes under it. The engineer tasked to rebuild and make the bridge higher begs Maria Cacao not to pass under it anymore. She agrees, the bridge is saved, but that is the last time she is seen. Because some people fail to return the things they borrow, she has stopped lending them anything. And when other bridges in the area collapse people say that Maria Cacao is probably passing under them (Albuero 1977:39-40).

In the evening, after a hard day's work, young and old alike gathered together and sang, drank, danced, and amused one another by narrating folk tales, a great many of which were extended humor narratives. Folktales include animal tales, fables, marchen, trickster tales, and numskull tales.

Animal tales are stories in which animals take on human qualities. They usually show how an animal outwits another animal through clever or deceptive tricks. A very ancient and well-known animal tale is "Ang Pagong at ang Matsing" (The Tortoise and the Monkey), made famous by Jose Rizal. It is about a tortoise and a monkey who plant halves of a banana tree. Thinking that the upper part with leaves would bear fruit soon, the greedy monkey plants the upper half. Naturally, it withers. The tortoise, on the other hand, gets the ugly-looking lower portion with the roots, but it flourishes and soon is laden with fruit. The tortoise, however, cannot climb the tree to gather the fruit, so the monkey volunteers to pick them. But he eats all the bananas while he is up on the tree, throwing the

skin down on the tortoise. Angry, the tortoise plants some shards of snail shells around the tree and hides under a coconut shell. The monkey comes down and lands on the shards. Wounded and bleeding, he searches for, and finds the tortoise. As punishment he gives the tortoise two choices: to be pounded with a mortar or be thrown into the water. The clever tortoise chooses the mortar and deceives the monkey into thinking that he is afraid of drowning. The monkey throws the tortoise in the water, where the latter soon surfaces laughing (Rizal 1962: 103-104).

Another example of an animal tale is the Tinguian “The Carabao and the Snail.” A carabao bathing in a river meets a snail and ridicules the snail for its slowness. The snail protests and challenges the carabao to a race. After running a long distance, the carabao stops and calls out to his opponent, “Snail!” A snail lying by the river answers. After a long while, the carabao stops again and calls; another snail responds. The carabao, surprised that a snail could move so fast, runs on and on until he drops dead (Eugenio 1989:31).

A fable is an animal tale that gives a moral lesson. The Cebuano tale entitled “The Frog Who Wanted to Be As Big As an Ox” begins when two young frogs see their sibling crushed to death by the hoof of an ox. The frogs rush home to report the incident to their mother frog. The mother, believing that she can be as big as the ox she will fight, puffs herself up and asks her children if she has become as big as the ox. The children say no. No matter how much she puffs her self up, she still cannot equal the ox’s size, but she keeps puffing until she bursts (Eugenio 1989:82).

Some folktales are classified as *marchen* or tales “of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes ...[They happen] in an unreal world without definite locality or definite characters and are filled with the marvelous” (Eugenio 1982:9). Most Philippine *marchen* are local, adaptations of foreign folktales. A tale of tender beauty is the story of the swan maiden, of which 27 versions have been identified all over the country. One version from the Mansaka is about a man who takes a maiden as his wife by stealing and hiding her wings and feathers while she bathes in a lake. They have a child. One day while he is gone she finds her wings and flies away. He searches for her and recovers her only after much difficulty and after performing impossible tasks.

Tricksters are among the most popular characters in folk literature. The Visayan Pusong, the incorrigible prankster, victimizes plebeian and king without distinction. Condemned by the king to drown for playing a trick on him, Pusong is able to get a man to take his place by telling him that the King is forcing him to marry his beautiful daughter. The King, surprised to see Pusong alive, threatens to put him in prison, but Pusong is able to convince the King that the King’s dead parents and relatives would like him to visit them at the bottom of the sea. The King then decides to take Pusong’s place, so he has himself put in a cage and thrown into the sea. Pusong then becomes king.

Another trickster, Pilandok, regales the people of Mindanao with his outrageous pranks. Asked by Bombola why he is tied to a tree, he replies that the sky is going to fall and being tied will save him by forcing him not to panic. Bombola pleads to be saved too. Upon Pilandok's orders, he unties Pilandok and gathers rattan from the forest to tie himself with. Bombola stays tied to the tree until he dies of hunger and thirst.

A numskull tale is a story depicting the stupidity of a nitwit like the Tagalog Juan Tamad. In the story "Juan and the Alimango," Juan is asked by his mother to buy crabs and *palayok* (clay pots) in the market. Too lazy to carry the crabs, he makes them walk home, and to make it easier to carry the pots he makes a hole at the bottom of each, puts a string through the holes and carries them home strung together. In the end, Juan and his mother have no pots for cooking nor crabs for their meal.

Conclusion

Today, oral literature remains a living tradition because it has survived through centuries of encounter with alien cultures among the various cultural communities unchanged by colonization. Because so much of oral literature has now been recorded and published, it now provides contemporary artists materials to build upon or draw from. For example, Manuvu myths first recorded decades ago have since been transformed by Ballet Philippines into the dance musical *Tales of the Manuvu*. Folk myths too are the sources for The Philippine Educational Theater Association's (PETA) *Maria Makiling*, *Dupluhang Bayan* and *Radia Mangandiri*; Tanghalang Pilipino's *Korido* and *Bidasari*; Bulwagang Gantimpala's *Awit ni Kadugnung*; Sining Kambayoka's *Mga Kuwentong Maranaw*; and Dapat Dabaw's *Sinalimba*.

Similarly, sculptors and painters have translated the folkloric characters, animals, and dances into contemporary arts. Botong Francisco's *Maria Makiling*, Solomon Saprid's *Tikbalang* series, Abdulmari Imao's *Sarimanok* paintings, Roberto Feleo's *Binura* series, Aro Soriano's paintings and terra-cotta sculptures based on Philippine proverbs are a few examples of contemporary works of art deriving inspiration from folk literature.

Folk songs and ethnic chants have likewise been used by 20th-century composers for their art works. The *kumintang*, *kundiman*, and *balitaw* were made into art songs by Nicanor S. Abelardo, Francisco Santiago, and Francisco Buencamino, as may be seen in "Mutya ng Pasig" (Muse of Pasig) and "Pakiusap" (Plea). Lucio D. San Pedro's *Suite Pastoral* incorporates "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan" (As the Cradle Rocks), a folk lullaby. Antonino Buenaventura's *Mindanao Sketches*, Angel M. Pena's *Igorot Rhapsody*, Lucrecia R. Kasilag's *Tocatta* for percussion and winds, Jose Maceda's *Udlot-Udlot* (Fluctuation), and Ramon P. Santos' *Du-A* (Two) are

all inspired by ethnic forms and rhythms, sometimes using ethnic instruments or alluding to their sounds through Western instruments.

In the present search for a Filipino national cultural identity, the importance of folklore cannot be overestimated. Oral literary tradition lies at the deepest layer of the national culture; it is the Filipino's recourse in times of greatest joy and deepest sorrow, the spring from which flows the national consciousness.

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