

FOLK NARRATIVE

The folk narrative may be any story, tale, account, or reconstruction, told in prose among the people of a cultural group or a national community, based on some past event which is either accepted as fictional or believed to have some historical basis. It is called *kuwentong bayan* in Tagalog, *sugilanon* in the Visayan languages, *sarita* in Ilocano, *sussur/sutsut/tudtud/appoyaw* in Isinay, and *tuturan* in Batak.

There are three general types of folk narratives: myths, legends, and folktales. Myths are considered to have a validating purpose in society: they are commonly regarded as vehicles of transmitted values, beliefs, and practices, and are therefore held sacred. Legends narrate extraordinary events in a society's past, and are sometimes believed to have actually happened, because they often serve to explain the origin of objects, places, or phenomena; or to educate people about lessons derived from certain human experiences. In contrast, folktales are not regarded as moral dogma or sacred truth requiring belief. The events that folktales narrate may or may not have happened, and generally occur in an indefinite time and place. Furthermore, they are told primarily for entertainment, although they do also have instructional value, as in the case of religious and didactic tales, as well as animal fables which play up the conflict between positive and negative values by presenting a world parallel to that of human society. Folktales are almost always idealistic in content, and often have a happy ending.

Myth

A myth is a prose narrative explaining how the world and people came to be in their present form. It is usually associated with theology, religion, and ritual. It is called *alamat* in Tagalog, *gugud* or *batbat* in Bukidnon, and *ituan* in Mandaya. An origin myth is called *babarawon* in Mansaka, *usulan kissa* in Tausug, and *tuturan at kagunggurangan* in Palawan. A creation myth is called *kaawn kisa* in Mansaka. An *oggood* is a mythological narrative about the Bontoc culture hero, Lumawig. A recited, rather than chanted, narrative in the current Bukidnon idiom about the epic hero Agyu is called *mantukaw*.

The characters in a myth include beings in the supernatural or spirit world and beings in the world of people. Thus, deities, gods, goddesses, ancestral spirits, male and female culture heroes, sacred animals and objects, and supernatural phenomena may coexist in the world of myth.

The early Filipinos believed in one supreme god and in a number of lesser gods, with each ethnolinguistic group having its own version of a supernatural hierarchy and its relationships with the world of human beings. Thus, the "supreme being" is called a variety of names in Philippine mythology: Bathala (Tagalog), Mangetchay (Pampango), Gugurang (Bikol), Lumauig or Kabunian (Bontoc),

Liddum (Ifugao), Mahal Makaako (Mangyan), Laon (Visayan), Magbabaya (Bukidnon), Melu (Bilaan), Makalidung (Manobo), Manama (Manuvu), Ampu (Palawan), and Apo Namalyari (Aeta).

Myths about Filipino gods depict them either in conflict or falling in love with each other, or else they are shown descending on the earth to intermarry with mortals. In a Bukidnon myth, a god sends an airship to earth in order to bring up his chosen people to the skyworld, led by their culture hero Agyu. A Bicol myth recounts the conflict between the good god Gugurang and the evil god Asuang when the latter attempts to steal fire from the former. An idyllic love affair is that between Captan, god of the land breezes, and Maguayan, goddess of the sea breezes. On the spot where Captan and Maguayan consummated their love, a bamboo plant grows, and from it emerge the first man and woman. Another love affair is that between the sun god and a sea nymph, which eventually leads to the creation of the island of Cebu. An Igorot myth recounts how Mayingit, son of the god of thunder, falls in love with a mortal maiden named Bagan, and begets a child with her. He does not stay to live with them, but comes down every now and then when his help is needed, as when Bagan gives birth to their baby, and later when he implants parts of his body into his young son to make the boy practically invincible in war. The mythical epic of the southern Palawan highland group tells how the superhero Kudaman, blest with godly power in love and combat, defeats all his enemies, woos and weds the 10 loveliest goddesses in the world.

Origin myths explain a great variety of phenomena—the creation of the world, of people, of land and water features, of plants and animals. Philippine myths give three versions of the creation of the world. In some myths, the world was created by a supreme being out of dust and other material. In other myths, the world came to be as a result of conflict between opposing forces, as in the story of the cosmic battle between the sky and the sea, which led to the formation of islands. A third group of myths is more fanciful, such as the Mangyan and Sulod myths which give an account of how the world was formed from the feces of a worm.

The origin of people is also given varying accounts in the myths. One group attributes the creation of man and woman to the work of a supreme being. A second group sees the first man and woman emerging, fully formed, from two internodes of a bamboo split open by the pecking beak of a bird (Visayan), or from two stumps of a banana plant (Igorot), or from two hatching eggs (Mandaya). And a third group of myths tells us that the first inhabitant of the earth actually descended from the skyworld. In an Ifugao myth, the first man and woman were children of Kabigat of the skyworld. This god had sent his two children to the earthworld to populate it.

Creation myths contain scattered references that indicate the early Filipinos' conception of the universe. This universe consists of the skyworld, the earth or middleworld, and the underworld. To the Kiangnan Ifugao, the layer we live on is the earth world *luta*; the four layers above us constitute the skyworld *daya*; and

beneath the one we live on is the underworld *dalom*, which has an unknown number of layers. The Maranao also believe in a complex universe where the earth and sky are divided into seven layers each. This is similar to the Palawan belief that the universe is a vertical structure of realms, a series of seven ascending and seven descending “plates.” Human beings live in the middle of this structure, in the *dunya*. The Bilaan, on the other hand, believe in a nine-layered universe which has the shape of two bowls set rim to rim to form a spherical whole.

Early Filipinos believed that once upon a time, the sky was low, and there are myths to explain how and why the sky went up to where it is now. According to most of the myths, the sky used to be very near the earth’s surface, but it raised itself after receiving so many complaints from people whose pestles would keep hitting the sky’s underbelly when they pounded rice. Philippine mythology has accounts of the great deluge, a universal theme in world folklore. In myths from the Mountain Province, the great flood happens in some distant past, and the survivors are always a brother and sister who find themselves stranded on top of two separate mountains, and who face the task of repopulating the world. In myths from the Visayas and Mindanao, the survivors are couples who become the ancestors of different ethnic groups.

Myths explaining the origin of geographical features, of plants and animals and their characteristics, employ a variety of motifs. Many of them center around the fate of faithful lovers. A river in Mindoro called Mag-asawang Tubig (wedded waters), for instance, is said to have miraculously sprung from the graves of a couple who were so devoted to each other they prayed they would be together even after death. A waterfall named Bridal Veil is said to have been formed to commemorate a dramatic event: once, an angry stepmother poured down water on her stepdaughter and her lover while they were sliding down a vine to elope. Mount Mayon in Bicol was supposed to have risen miraculously from the grave of two star-crossed lovers, Daragang Magayon and Ulap. The coconut tree, meanwhile, sprang from the grave of a young man who was killed and buried by his rival in the garden of his sweetheart.

The transformation motif is dominant in origin myths. In many myths, animals are said to have been formerly human beings. In most cases, the transformation serves as a punishment for human misdeeds. Thus, the shark was actually once upon a time a rich, greedy, rapacious man who was transformed into a water predator by the god of the sea. The crocodile used to be an evil, four-eyed brother of a sultan who victimized women. The transformation of a human being into a plant also occurs in myth, but here the change often is an act of mercy from God: in answer to a prayer, as in the story of the pine tree and the *dama de noche*; or to save the heroine from harm, as in the story of the *makahiya*. Transformation need not mean a change from one state to another. In the myth of the rice, the staple is said to have been a food solely for the gods in the beginning, but the gods eventually and in varying ways allowed it to be shared with human beings.

Legend

This form goes by various terms in the Philippines: *alamat* (Tagalog), *osipon* (Bicol), *sarita* (Ilocano), *istorya* (Pangasinan), *kasugiran* or *sumatanon* (Cebuano), *gintunaan* (Ilongo), *kissa* (Tausug), *kabbata* (Ivatan), *tutul sa pakapoon* (Maranao), and so on. In terms of subject matter, Philippine legends may be classified into the following groups: heroic and historical, religious, supernatural, toponymic, and miscellaneous.

Heroic and historical legends are accounts of episodes in the lives of great women and men: culture heroes, epic heroes, prominent men and women, and individuals possessing extraordinary power or gifts. The Muslim groups of southern Philippines have genealogical narratives tracing the noble descent of certain individuals. These are called *tarsila* by the Maguindanao and *salsila* by the Tausug and the Sama. The Manobo's historical accounts are called *guhud*. There are legends about Jose Rizal which underscore his unusual qualities as a “renaissance man” with multiple callings—painter, doctor, swordsman, scientist, novelist, patriot. There are also legends about earlier culture heroes, such as Palaris, the leader of a Pangasinan uprising early in the Spanish rule; Datu Sumakwel, who was among the legendary ten Bornean datu who settled in Panay; and Lapu-Lapu, native chieftain of Mactan whose forces defeated Ferdinand Magellan. Still an object of discussion among social scientists is the historical provenance of Urduja, the woman warrior whom the Pangasinan claim as their own.

Religious legends recount the miraculous manifestations of God and the Christian saints. The greatest number of legends in this group are those recounting the miracles performed by the Birheng Maria or Mary, followed by the Santo Niño. There are even joint articles performed by Mary and other saints, such as Santa Clara and San Pascual Baylon. In Obando, Mary reigns as a patron saint together with the two, and she is known as Nuestra Señora de Salambao. The miracle for which the trio is famous is rewarding kind childless couples with offspring. Legends also record the individual miracles performed by Mary in her various shrines all over the country: Santo Domingo Church (Manila), Antipolo (Rizal), Caysasay (Batangas), Manaoag (Pangasinan), Piat (Cagayan), Naga (Camarines Sur), and Zamboanga. The Santo Niño figures in his own legends—how he plays a prank on a fish vendor, how he keeps a poor, old dying woman provided with rice, how he likes to play, and many similar tales.

There is a wide variety of supernatural beings encountered in Philippine legends. Tradition has led the folk to believe in the existence of “underworld characters,” such as the *aswang* (witch), *kapre* (black, hairy giant with a large cigar), *duwende* (gnome or troll), *engkanto* (fairy), *santilmo* (dancing ball of fire), *tiyanak* (goblin believed to be the spirit of an infant who died unbaptized), *tikbalang* (witch with a horse's neck, head, and hoofs) in addition to the devil, ghosts, mermaids, and

assorted strange beings. In some of these legendary encounters between human and supernatural beings, no harm comes to the victim beyond fright, but in other cases, the meeting could be fatal. In the legend about Maypajo, a mother loses her daughter to a *nuno sa punso* (a gnome who dwells in an earth mound). The creature takes a fancy to the girl and abducts her. The mother dies from grief and exhaustion, as she digs away at the earth mound with her bare hands in a futile attempt to retrieve her daughter. Some *engkanto* and *engkantada* (sprites, fairies, enchanted ones), however, are beneficent creatures, the best known being Mariang Makiling of the Tagalog, Mariang Sinukuan of the Pampango, and Maria Cacao of the Visayan. They are female figures who are said to be beautiful and rich, and who prove to be generous in their dealings with human beings. For some reason or other, but mostly because of disillusionment, they withdrew from contact with human society.

A popular form of legend is the toponymic one, or that which explains the origin of names of places. In these legends, folk etymology is seen in the ways of place naming. The first and most common one is naming a place after people, such as lovers, friends, and so on. Thus, Mariveles in Bataan is said to have come from the name of a girl, Maria Velez, who figures in a story told by folk in that place. Mindoro supposedly comes from the names of two lovers, Mina and Doro, although a legend could have as easily been formed around the plausible theme of a land of gold mines, “mina de oro.” Maria Cristina Falls in Lanao owes its name to two sisters, Maria and Cristina. A place may also be named after a plant that strikes the fancy of people who discover the place and find the plant rather remarkable. Lukban in Quezon may have been actually called such because the people who first settled the place were impressed by *lukban* (pomelo) trees growing there, or by their succulent fruit. Often, a place name is the result—or so the legend says—of a miscommunication between native folk and descending or conquering foreigners. Thus, the name Calamba, a town in Laguna, is said to have stuck after a Spanish official thought a woman had given her the name of the place; the woman thought she had been asked the name of the jar she was selling. In some instances, the name of a place is merely the shortened form of something somebody is supposed to have uttered to someone else. Thus, we have names like Tagaytay, said to have been derived from the expression, “Taga, Itay!” (Strike, Father!). Marikina’s provenance is the phrase *Marikit ka na* (You are now beautiful), whereas Mindanao is claimed to have been contracted from *Amin danao dini* (There’s a lake here). Most accounts of the origin of place names in Philippine legends have a most apocryphal ring to them, and have the effect of beclouding the actual historical provenance of the terms. Sometimes a place name describes a memorable event that is supposed to have occurred in that place. A humorous example is the place name Hinubuan (“stripped of underpants”), given to a river, bridge, and barrio in Marinduque. Legend has it that once a girl lost part of her clothing while she was trying to free herself from the clutches of a white monkey. This may allude to some historical truth.

Folktales

Folktales are classified into animal tales or fables, magic tales, humorous tales, novelistic tales, religious and didactic tales. They are called *kuwento* by the Tagalog, *sarita* by the Ilocano, *sudsud* by the Kankanay, *istorya* by the Ivatan, *dimolat* by the Ilongot, *oman-oman* by the Mandaya, *tutul* by the Maguindanao, *nanangen* by the Bukidnon, *pangumanon* or *teterema* by the Manobo, *babatukon* or *human-human* by the Mansaka, *tutul* by the Maranao, *uliran* by the Pangasinan, and *katakata* by the Sama and Tausug.

Fables are short tales that impart a lesson usually in morality and in virtue. Because the fable is a popular folk genre, the ideas contained in it normally reflect the ideas and values of ordinary people about the conduct of life. Among the homely virtues implicit or explicit in the message of fables are loyalty, gratitude, prudence, moderation, resignation, industry, thrift, and the like. The two essential parts of a fable are the narrative text and the normative message. Although the majority of fables are stories about animals, a few are about plants or natural elements, such as the sea, river, sun, and wind; some others are about human beings as well. The Maranao call their fables *tutul a pangangayaman* and stories about birds and fishes, *tutul o manga suda ago papanok*.

Many Philippine fables are a retelling or adaptation of Aesop's fables, which were introduced in colonial times, and became widely circulated through the schools, having become part of children's literary readings. Among these are the animal fables "The Crab and Its Mother," in which the mother crab asks its young to walk straight when she herself cannot manage this impossible task; and "The Hawk and the Turtle," in which a foolish turtle asks to be taken along by the hawk in the latter's flight, only to be dropped and smashed on the ground. The Bohol plant fable, "The Mango Tree and the Lampakanay Grass," echoes the fable about the boastful olive tree and the lowly but pliant reed, which teaches that one should bend before the storm in order to survive.

Other fables may have had Asian origins. One of the most loved tales, retold by Jose Rizal in the 19th century, is "The Monkey and the Turtle." According to the story, a monkey climbs up a banana tree to get a bunch of bananas. He refuses to share the food with the turtle, who forthwith sticks spikes and thorns on the trunk. The monkey slides down the trunk and, howling in pain and anger, it proposes to throw the turtle into the river as a punishment for the prank. The turtle pleads in all earnestness to be punished in any other way but that, so the monkey, relishing revenge, proceeds to do exactly that. This suits the turtle perfectly and the latter swims happily away, having put one over the frustrated monkey. The famous moral derived from this fable has become a classic Tagalog proverb: *Matalino man ang matsing, napaglalalangan din* (The clever monkey can be tricked).

Magical tales, also called fairy tales or *marchen*, are stories of fantasy and wonder, which take place in imaginary settings. Make-believe characters accomplish marvelous feats of heroism and bravery, usually after going through a series of

difficulties, misfortunes, and ordeals, at the end succeeding in their goal: to win the heart of a loved one, vanquish evil, rescue a kingdom, and live happily ever after in a land that never was.

Such tales are told mainly to please and entertain, but they can assume a didactic stance, and therefore also impart a moral, the most universal one perhaps the idea that “love conquers all” or that “good triumphs over evil any time.” The magical tale is melodramatic in tone and in character. The protagonists are archetypes and few in number: male or female hero, friendly helpers or allies, and villain. There is no character development the hero is good and clever from beginning to end. However, what makes the magical tale exciting is the reversal of fortune in the lives of the characters. Poor but kindhearted persons may find themselves transformed into a prince or princess, king or queen at the end, while the arrogant rich and the oppressive villain might find themselves suddenly powerless. Usually, there would be a foil to the virtuous male or female hero. Thus, the poor but kind hero may have a rich but selfish brother or sister, as in the Tagalog tale about the 51 thieves.

In “Si Makut,” a western Manobo version of the western fairy tale about the crafty Puss-in-Boots, the hero is a very poor fellow bereft of a family, and lives only on the plants he grows in his field, but his inherent goodness brings him fortune, love, and happiness. In Abadeja, a Visayan variation on the Cinderella theme, the heroine at the beginning of the story is a poor, maltreated daughter, but she eventually triumphs over unkindness and prejudice, with all the world at her feet in the end. The difficulties and tribulations that the leading characters undergo are exemplified by the experiences of the female hero in the Tausug tale, “There Was a King,” in which six older sisters hate and envy their youngest sister who is the most beautiful of her father’s children. Sometimes, the hero has to confront not a relative or any other human being, but some kind of supernatural adversary, such as a dragon in “The Adventures of Fortunato,” a witch in “Pedro and the Witch,” an ogre in “Suac and His Adventures,” or the devil himself in “The Reward of Kindness.”

The hero in the magic tale has to perform tasks, which constitute the central plot of the story. A common type of task is a quest or search for a certain person, place, or precious object. In the Visayan swan maiden story “Magboloto,” the hero goes in quest of his supernatural wife, who has flown back to her abode in the skyworld. In another story, “Juan del Mundo,” it is the female hero who goes out in search of her snake-husband who disappears when she breaks a taboo. In “Ang mga Pakikipagsapalaran ni Juan” (Juan and His Adventures), the hero looks for his three sisters who have been taken away by a snake charmer, because of some offense committed by their father. In the same story, the hero also searches for a lost princess kept captive by a giant. Similarly, “Ang Mahiwagang Singsing” (The Magic Ring) tells of the quest for a beautiful woman who lives in the “seventh gallery of heaven” and for the Goddess of the Sea who has “a star on her forehead and a moon on her neck.”

The accomplishment of tasks becomes a precondition for the satisfaction of the hero's goals. In "Juan Sadut" (Juan the Lazy One), the hero is burdened with three tasks so that he might be allowed to marry the king's daughter: fight and kill a fierce tiger, fetch a burning stone that a mountain dragon has in its possession, and give the correct answer to a puzzle the king will pose to him. In a Pampango tale, the task imposed on the hero by a wicked datu coveting his wife is to get an enchanted marble from one of the caves in a certain mountain guarded by monsters, which is the only way by which he can prevent the loss of his wife. In "Magboloto," the hero has to perform three tasks before his wife's grandmother will allow him to take his wife back to earth from the skyworld. These are spreading sesame seeds on the sand and gathering them up again, hulling a hundred bushels of rice, and chopping down all the trees on a mountain.

Obviously, all tasks imposed upon a hero range from the very difficult to the impossible. Sometimes, the story invests him with some help through the presence of auxiliary characters, who may either be ordinary human beings, such as a kind old woman or a hermit, or they may be animal helpers or supernatural beings whom the hero wins over to his side. In Philippine tales, animal helpers are of various kinds. They could be a fish who helps the hero recover a ring from the sea; an eagle who flies the hero to the skyworld where his wife has been taken away to; a bird who obtains for the hero a ring from a princess; a horse, or even a runaway elephant, who takes care of the hero in the forest. In one story, the animal helpers—the king of the lions, the king of the fishes, and the king of the eagles—are the animal brothers-in-law of the hero. Supernatural helpers may be friendly witches, a god or goddess, or a grateful dead man whose voices tell the hero what to do. In still another tale, the series of friendly helpers in the hero's quest for his missing wife include the North Wind, South Wind, East Wind, and West Wind.

A magic object, analogous to an amulet or a talisman, is a usual device in magic tales used to create fantastic effects. This is passed on to the male or female hero by a friendly helper to help him or her triumph over danger and misfortune. In a Tagalog Cinderella-type tale, the helper she-crab tells the female hero to bury her shell in the yard, and from this shell a magic lukban wishing tree would grow. A husband, thinking of leaving home to get away from his shrewish wife, meets a hunchback who gives him three objects—a purse, a goat, and a table—which are all stolen from him by a deceitful friend who substitutes counterfeit articles for them. Finally, the hero is given a magic cane with which he beats up the deceitful friend and recovers the missing magic objects. In some tales, the magic object is given in exchange for some favor. In the Ilocano tale "Juan and the Bangar Tree," a tree spirit gives the hero a magic pot as a reward for not cutting down a tree that is its home. When this is stolen, the spirit gives him a purse, which is also stolen, and finally a drum, which he uses to recover the other objects. Other magic objects found in Philippine fairy tales are a cap that makes the wearer invisible, a pair of flying sandals, a key that opens all doors, a wishing ring, a magic

handkerchief, a magic rope, and a magic nail.

Humorous tales abound in Philippine folklore. There are generally two subtypes: numskull or noodlehead tales and trickster tales. Numskull tales narrate the funny, comic, absurd, occasionally pathetic, bumbling acts of a foolish person. In these tales, the audience is moved to feel pity or exasperation, or both, over the antihero's misadventures and stupidities, which rain down disaster upon himself, even as it marvels at how he manages to survive all these. These stories, of which the Philippines seems to have an ample share, have become an endless source of fun and merriment in any gathering where they are told and retold. The most celebrated seems to be "Juan Tanga" (Juan the Fool), a less cerebral version of the culture hero (or antihero), Juan Tamad (Lazy Juan). Juan Tanga commits atrocious blunders, some of which are recounted below.

Told by his mother to choose a quiet woman for a wife, he brings home a dead woman. His mother tells him: "Those who smell bad are dead." His mother farts, and he buries her. He smells bad to himself, and he decides to let the river current carry him, as he lies on a raft made of banana trunks. He survives. Robbers find him and make him their housekeeper. Told to keep quiet, he breaks the rice pot, which was making a lot of noise as the rice boiled. Sent to market to buy new earthen pots and some crabs, he punches holes into the pots and strings them up with a rattan vine for easier handling, and he releases the crabs into the water, instructing them to go to his house ahead of him.

Another type of numskull tale is the internationally known one about a gang of numskulls who miscount themselves. A Pangasinan version, "The Seven Crazy Fellows," describes a madcap series of events.

Seven fellows go fishing. When ready to go home, they count themselves, but the counter does not count himself, so they think one of them has drowned. They dive repeatedly for the "missing one." An old man comes by and corrects them. He brings them along and gives them tasks to do. One fool hangs his hat and bag of rice on a deer's antlers, thinking they are tree branches, and the deer runs off with them. Sent to fetch water from a well, a second fool sees his reflection in the water, nods to it, and when the image nods back, he jumps in and drowns. The third fool cooks a chicken without removing the feathers. The fourth fool, asked to keep flies off the face of a sleeping woman, strikes a fly on the woman's nose with a hard blow, killing the woman. The fools carry the corpse to church, but it falls out of the coffin. Told to go back for the body, the fools see an old woman sleeping on the roadside, and carry her off. The crazy priest performs the burial ceremony despite the old woman's protests, saying her burial fee has been paid. Going home, the fools see the corpse that had fallen off. Thinking it is the ghost of the woman they had buried, they run away in different directions and get scattered all over Luzon.

A stock character in numskull tales is the fool who takes things very literally.

Told to “watch the palay” drying in the sun, a fool in a Sulu tale does exactly that—just watch, without bothering to drive away the ducks eating up the grains. Asked by his mother to “clear the yard,” a fool in another tale cuts down all the trees, shrubs, and vines in the yard, and burns them in a big heap.

Sometimes a numskull may develop into a clever character, or a trickster. In the story of Juan Tanga, the antihero is expelled from the town by the priest and ordered “never to set foot on the soil of that town again.” Juan buys a cart, fills it with red soil from another barrio, and rides back to town, telling the angry priest that the soil he is standing on is his own and not the soil of the town.

A trickster tale is one that narrates the doings of a central character who deceives or plays clever tricks on other people. The trickster may be a human or an animal. Human trickster heroes, like their animal counterpart, are forever hatching practical jokes on potential victims, or devising ways and means to get around obstacles put before them, usually by persons in authority. In many of these tales, thus, the reader empathizes with the trickster, who puts one over characters symbolizing power. Trickster tales are told mainly for amusement, although many people would hardly consider as amusing some of the tales that depict fatal consequences for the victim. Such humorous tales are called *tutul a piya kakuyakayad* by the Maranao.

Every region in the Philippines seems to have its own version of the proverbial trickster. The more popular ones are Juan, or Suan, of the Tagalog and Pampango, Juan Usong or Osong of the Bicol, Juan Pusong of the Visayan and Sulu, Payo and Bonifacio Bautista of Aklan, Abunnawas of Sulu, and Pilandok of the Maranao. The Visayan Juan Pusong shows a dark side of the trickster, being deceitful and dishonest and sometimes very cunning. At best he can be described as a scampish trickster whose swindles, notorious escapades, and practical jokes are always amusing, frequently off-color, sometimes obscene, but rarely villainous.

Sweet talk, subterfuge, substitution, sleight-of-hand: these are a few of the tricks used by the hero in coming out the winner in every situation. Here is an example:

For some offense, Juan is arrested and caged, to be thrown into the sea. Before that day comes, a prince happens to come by. Juan tricks him into taking his place in the cage by saying that the king imprisoned him for refusing to marry the princess, of whom he was not worthy. Seeing his chance, the prince goes into the cage, is thrown into the sea and drowns. Later, Juan “returns from the sea” and reports to the astonished king that he had seen the latter’s father and other loved ones where he had been. The king asks to be thrown into the sea. He drowns, and Juan becomes king.

Pusong, trickster of Sulu, is unique in that his victim is almost always the Sultan, and his exploits almost always consist in having illicit sexual relations with the Sultan’s wives, daughters, or close relatives. It seems that through the tricks Pusong is made to play on the Sultan in the stories, the folk are expressing a

subconscious, collective desire to get back at the Sultan, who used to reign autocratically over the sultanate. The trickster Pilandok also enjoys immense popularity among the Maranao. His name is obviously similar to the Malaysian trickster Pelandok, except that the Malaysian character is an animal, a mouse-deer, whose animal counterpart in the Philippines is the trickster turtle. Typical tricks that Pilandok plays on his victims include the following.

Pilandok tells a victim he is guarding the sultan's gong. The victim asks to be allowed to beat it. The gong turns out to be a beehive. Bees sting the victim until he passes out. Pilandok tells a victim he is guarding the black belt of the queen. A victim asks to try it on. The belt turns out to be a snake, which coils around the victim, killing him. Then Pilandok ties himself to a tree. A victim, passing by, asks why he has done so. Pilandok says the sky is about to fall and he does not want to panic. Victim asks to be tied also so he could be saved. Pilandok ties the victim to the tree and leaves him to die of hunger and thirst.

In general, the trickster is portrayed as a clever character, but occasionally he lapses into stupidity and behaves like an absolute fool. This happens to Pilandok one time, when he goes out looking for a midwife. He does not know what a midwife looks like. Successively, he fetches a heron, a white male goat, and finally two human-eating giants. His wife is so terrified she gives birth without benefit of a midwife.

Novelistic tales, also called novellas, are a subtype of the folk tale, in which the action occurs in the real world with definite time and place, and has characters who represent recognizable types in human society. It differs from the fairy tale by having little or absolutely no magical or supernatural element. Human wit and intelligence, rather than magic powers, win the day for the male or female hero. One popular pattern takes a clever peasant woman as the leading character, pitting her against a king whom she so impresses with her brilliance that he either marries her to his son or marries her himself. A Philippine story of this type is retold by Fansler, 1921, "Si Marcelang Matalino" (Sagacious Marcela). In the story, Marcela, a peasant known for her intelligence, is sent a tiny bird by the king, who asks her to cook 12 dishes out of it. She sends the king a pin and asks him to make 12 spoons out of it. When the king asks Marcela to procure bull's milk so he could be cured of an illness, she replies that her father has given birth and will need the milk himself. The king realizes that his absurd orders are easily matched by the woman's clever answers. Marcela's male counterpart is Lungpigan, a peasant who also vanquishes the king in a contest of wits. The king then takes the humble peasant hero to his palace and marries him to his daughter. Curiously, in stories such as these, princesses, and sometimes princes, become no more than prizes to be won or awarded to people they see for the first time.

The novelistic tale becomes more interesting when it features both clever male and female heroes. In the story, "Ang Kapalaran ni Ludovico" (Ludovico's Fate), the hero's seemingly strange behavior—opening his umbrella when passing under trees and wearing his shoes when crossing a stream, dividing a chicken by giving

the head and neck to the father, the feet to the mother, the wings to the daughter, keeping the rest for himself—are explained and defended by the clever woman, who later marries the man. The enigmatic remark uttered by the hero, “The palay is still being planted but the farmers are already eating it,” is explained by the clever woman to mean that the hungry farmers were eating at home the capital advanced to them by their exploitative landlord. Another admirable character in a tale is the clever wife who uses her beauty and intelligence to remain faithful to her husband and to confound and embarrass her suitors.

Religious and didactic tales, also called miracle tales, are mainly told for the purpose of illustrating the rewards of virtue and the punishment of vice and folly. Hence, their social function is instructional and normative. Due to the strongly religious character of many of these tales, not only suspension of disbelief is called for, as in fairy tales, but a strong spiritual faith as well. This group of folktales includes *exempla* or model characters, rational fables, parables, and magic tales of a didactic nature.

In a typical miracle tale, an innocent child, seeing the crucified Christ for the first time, takes pity on the “thin man” hanging on the cross and brings him food. Jesus then performs a miracle by coming down from the cross, eating with the child, and playing with him. Through this child, a sinful priest is able to atone for his sins and regains the right to heaven. This kind of story echoes the theme of the Spanish miracle story turned into film, *Marcelino Pan y Vino* (Marcelino Bread and Wine). In another religious tale, the Virgin Mary saves a devotee by substituting for her while she is being taken to the demon as payment for his gambling debts. Because of the miracle, the sinful husband repents and becomes a good husband.

Didactic tales underscore many beliefs and values held in folk ethos. A typical didactic tale pattern centers on the theme of unavoidable fate or predestination. In one story, a king dreams that his daughter is going to marry the son of a poor couple who had given him lodging when he got lost once in the forest while hunting. The king orders the commoner child to be killed, but the child survives, grows up, and eventually marries the king’s daughter. In another tale, an old woman prophesies to a rich man that he will marry the dirty little girl he sees selling fish. Fearing the prophecy, the rich man stabs the girl and throws her into the river, but the girl lives and much later marries the man.

Another didactic-tale pattern derives from the lesson that children should love and revere their parents especially when they are old. A central motif is that of the ungrateful son being indirectly reproached by the ingenuous behavior of his own son. In one tale, an irate man makes a wooden plate for his aged father, because the old man always breaks a plate whenever he eats. Seeing what he has done, the man’s young son takes a piece of woodboard and carves plates out of it, saying that they are for his father and mother when they grow old. The man weeps, realizing his error. In an analogous story, a man brings his old father to a hut in a

distant farm, intending to abandon him there with only a basket of provisions and a blanket. The man's young son has an inspired idea: he gets the blanket, cuts it into two pieces, and says he is preparing for his own father's old age, when he will do what his father is now doing to his grandfather. The man comes to his senses, takes his old father back home and takes good care of him.

Sometimes a didactic tale is told to illustrate a proverb. A Bicol tale, "The Favorite Son," illustrates the proverb that a crooked tree ought to be straightened out while young, because then it would be difficult to do this when the tree has grown. In the story, an only son is so spoiled by his parents that he becomes very demanding and disrespectful. He comes home one day hungry but does not find any food. He flies into a rage and strikes a person in bed who he thinks is his father, and flees, thinking he has killed the person. The parents pray that God may forgive their errant son, and that He guide him on his way. Far away, the son reforms, works hard, and becomes rich. Much later, a famine strikes. The father, now reduced to begging, finds his way to the house of this rich young man, whom he does not recognize to be his son. But the son recognizes the old man and takes him in. He tells the old man to straighten out some mature branches of the guava tree, but the old man admits his failure to do so, saying that the branches should have been straightened out while young. The son breaks down, asks for forgiveness, reveals himself, and reproaches his father for not having taught him respect and obedience while he was still a boy. The son takes good care of his father, whose last days become happy.

Thus, didactic tales can be miracle tales. They speak of positive transformations and of good values that can work wonders in the human being. • D. Eugenio

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