



Hybrid Identities: Filipino Fansubbers of Japanese Media and Self-Construction

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Abstract

Along with the increasing accessibility of Japanese media to audiences outside Japan, fansubbing has become a widespread online activity as well. This study focuses on Filipino fansubbers and poses the question, “What hybrid identities do fansubbers construct upon engaging in the activity of fansubbing?” The study makes use of Steve Bailey’s “hermeneutic subject” in analyzing the responses of five Filipino fansubbers to an interview. The study also employs interpretive textual analysis in examining some of the works of these fansubbers. The conclusion of the study highlights that, within the space of fandom, Filipino fansubbers are hybrid in two ways: (a) they are “prosumers” who both consume media and produce a new product out of it, and (b) they rely on a culturally hybrid identity where they capitalize on an imagined Japanese identity and an intermediary English-speaking one.

Keywords: fansubbers, hybridity, self-construction, Japanese media

THE MEANING of the word “hybridity” varies according to field, but among its most recent and most salient uses today is a definition that functions hand in hand with globalization.¹ In many cases, cultural hybridity is seen as one end of a binary with the theory of cultural imperialism as the other.² Whether hybridity is indeed the antithesis of the homogenizing power of cultural imperialism is perhaps a debate that will continue for a much longer period; the point of the matter is, however, globalization can no longer be considered seriously without the idea of hybridity. As Kraidy (2005) puts it, hybridity is the logic of globalization.

Our society today is not just rapidly globalizing but also being media-saturated, which is why hybridity is readily seen in various media texts. The popularity of Korean dramas on Philippine television, for example, is one of the ways globalization and hybridity enter our consciousness. While these dramas indoctrinate their Philippine audience with South Korean culture and lifestyle (albeit fictionalized), they do not come untampered. For South Korean dramas to become palatable to Philippine audience, their scripts have to be translated and dubbed into Filipino, Korean names changed into Christian ones,³ their various cultural cues adapted to Philippine context, etc. In short, Korean *durama* have to be *Koreanovelas* first before they can be marketed to a Filipino audience.⁴

This process of hybridity, however, does not stop with the (re-)production process of Philippine TV networks. As Filipinos consume these dramas, they too provide their own interpretations to what they watch. These interpretations would of course vary according to their background, upbringing, etc., thus giving more space for hybridities to take place.

Yet it is not only the text and the interpretations of which that turn out to be hybrid. In the process of consumption, media also serve as a reflexive tool that aids in self-construction.⁵ What hybrid identity comes out from consuming media produced in and by other countries therefore provides an interesting point of study. However, I would like to add other existing elements to this question. Given the intricate relationship between

globalization, hybridity, and self-construction, I focus on discussing a particular type of media consumers—the fansubber.

Various forms of media have become easier to access, thanks to the Internet, although the ways through which these media are being distributed do not always comply with laws on copyright. Given such accessibility, consumers can watch TV shows or films without the “tampering” of local television networks. Language becomes a barrier, however, when the consumer has little or no knowledge of the language used in the media. This is where the intermediary function of the fansubber comes in handy.

The term “fansubber” is portmanteau of the words “fan” and “sub,” the latter referring to subtitles. Fansubbers are fans who overlay English text onto a non-English media text (e.g., Japanese, Korean, etc.) for the purpose of sharing it with other fans who hold the same interest in but lack the ability to understand the language native to the media text. This process requires not only consumption but also production, in a sense that these fansubbers use these media texts and remodel them to serve their own ends. “Fansubs,” the products of these fansubbers, are also distributed over the Internet and enjoyed by other fans from elsewhere in the world. Such transnational activity, I argue, requires a certain hybrid identity to achieve.

The assumption that a hybrid identity lies in the fansubber is what led me to work on this research. The aim of this study therefore is to describe the hybrid identities that these fansubbers construct upon engaging in the activity of fansubbing. To achieve this, in-depth interviews with fansubbers were conducted as well as some interpretive textual analysis on their fansubs. In discussing my findings, I also make use of Steve Bailey’s theoretical model of the hermeneutic social subject to illustrate how media—Japanese in particular—and a transnational community of fans aid in the self-construction of the Filipino fansubber.⁶

In doing this study, I hope to present fansubbing as one of the ways Filipinos engage in the transnational flow of media. There have been studies about Filipino fans and media consumption, but little has been

researched about fansubbing. I also hope to provide an example of how identities are constructed and negotiated through the consumption and production of media. As Pertierra (2010) puts it, “Understandings of the self, the family, religion and society are being reformulated as the world is transformed by forces of globalization, economic rationalization and capitalist consumption. The new media is both an agent of this transformation as well as a lifeline to earlier cultural understandings.” Lastly, this study was done in hopes of providing more insights into the ideas of hybridity, globalization, and self-construction.

Fansubbing: From offline to online

Most of the papers on fansubbing thus far focus on the power tug-of-war between producers and consumers. From its inception to its continued practice today, fansubbing has had a much-debated relationship with commercial enterprises and underground businesses. In studying its history, one is confronted by such dilemma which, if not met with a discerning eye, could lead to much confusion. At this early point, I would like to clarify that my short retelling of fansubbing history differentiates and classifies fansubbers as “fans who make Japanese media more accessible to a larger community sharing the same interest, by appending translated text onto the original video, for the mere purpose of pleasure.” While clearly, they violate some copyright laws in doing so, I differentiate them from pirates, who turn fansubs—the products of these fansubbers—into moneymaking businesses. Having said so, I now proceed to discussing the relatively short history of fansubbing, from the available literature at hand.

The earliest practice of fansubbing dates back to the 1980s (Cintas & Sanchez 2006), a time when Japan was enjoying a period of affluence, after recovering from desolation that the war brought (McClain 2002). Hatcher (2005), in tracing the history of this fan activity in the United States, notes that back then, Japanese media, particularly anime, were available only to a select few. Anime clubs in universities propagated them among members by paying for translations and using expensive equipment

to overlay the video with English text. Some of these made profit when sold in fan gatherings like anime conventions; but taking into consideration the time, money, and effort it entails, as well as the small community that consumes it, one could hardly say that a significant profit was made from these fansubbed videos.

Noticing the growing market, private companies started tapping into this unrealized industry, making the consumption of subtitled anime a legal activity. These companies, of course, invested in titles with an already large following, and in this kind of system, fansubbers played an important role. Through their works, some titles became more known by the community, and upon growth of an available market, companies bought the copyrights. It was also an “unwritten” ethical rule for fansubbers to discontinue fansubbing a title once it has been licensed, an act done in support of the artists who made them.

Similarly, TV networks picked up on the growing market and started airing more Japanese shows for public consumption.⁷ In the case of anime, however, this was not met without problems. Traditionally, at least in the West, cartoons and animated shows were made for children—something parents would let their kids watch without worry. The difference in target audience and censorship laws applied to anime, however, made some titles unsuitable for non-Japanese audiences of young age. Cintas and Sanchez (2006) write that in Spain, in particular, some parents protested against the broadcast of such shows. As a result, some of these remained accessible only through fansubs, and such events helped the role of fansubbers as gatekeepers of information remain intact.

The phenomenon of piracy was not unique to the areas mentioned, however. Following fansubs, piracy became a norm in areas where Japanese media consumption was observed. Noticing the growing demand, pirates used the subtitled videos of fansubbers and made profit from them. Because of these pirated ventures, fansubbing became a questionable activity in terms of law. Its earlier role in creating market niches for private companies was nullified by the pirated competition. Within the fansubbing community,

groups that continued to fansub despite the licensing of titles also came into existence, giving an even lesser market share for commercially sold products. Such problems continue to this day.

With the coming of the Internet and the development of digital technology, fansubbing became a comparatively less exhaustive endeavor. While earlier practices imposed collective effort in producing fansubs, the availability of new software programs dedicated to subtitling has made it possible for a lone fan to produce his or her own fansubs. Nevertheless, with new technology comes sophistication that can only be achieved in a shorter period of time with a group effort.

The fansubbing etiquette established in the past also continues to the Internet age. Much like old practice, there are groups who stop once a title has been licensed locally. In the same way, there are also fansubbers who disregard licensure, but a common feature among them is a disclaimer that no profit is made from their releases, as well as a clear expression of contempt for those who do. Fansubbed videos are also at times appended with messages urging the viewer to buy the original product to support the artists who made them. Using such stance, fansubbers are able to maintain their identity as gatekeepers of information, whose time and energy spent on fansubbing gain no monetary rewards, much unlike the companies that benefit from the expansion of their markets, or the pirates that turn fansubbers' projects into moneymaking ventures.

Studies of fansubbing, aside from being scant, mainly focus on the different power struggles that fansubbing brings. Fansubbing is either a strategy to pull people toward a certain product or a transgression that violates copyright laws.

There are, however, many other dimensions to this activity that beg to be explored. The question of identity and self-construction in fansubbing, for example, remains a relatively uncharted terrain. It is for this reason that this study focuses on the matter.

The fansubbing process

To understand fansubbers further, it is important to take a look at the roles the members assume. Looking at these processes gives us an idea of the time and effort fansubbing takes.

Fansubs come in two types: soft and hard. Soft subs are usually scripts that a viewer can watch with the raw video file, which can be seen only when loaded onto a player. Some viewers prefer this kind of subs because they can disable the text display whenever they want to. It allows them to have the raw video file for their own use, which could be for graphics making (user icons, wallpapers, etc.), fan music videos, and/or many others.

Hard subs, on the other hand, allow fansubbers more control on how they want the text displayed but give no room for alteration to its viewers. Unlike soft subs, hard subs cannot be removed from the video once it has been encoded. Hard subs, however, usually offer more coded information, like romanized lyrics for opening themes stylized in the style of karaoke, or color-coded text for different characters.⁸

The process described below follows the production of hard subs:

Acquisition of raw video

Raw videos may be obtained by ripping videos from TV, DVD, radio, and at times streaming video. Providers of these may or may not be part of fansubbing groups; however, it is part of unwritten fansubbing etiquette to credit the source of the file. It is common for dramas and anime to be recorded by dedicated rippers, and then uploaded to a file-sharing system like torrents or clubboxes for fansubbers to pick up.

Translation

Using the video as reference, the translator translates the video from Japanese to the target language. This may be done while doing the “timing” or at a separate time.

Timing

Timing is the process of matching up the text display with the audio. A timer may preset the specific points when the text is to be displayed; in such case, the translation is filled in later. A timer may also wait for the translated script before timing the lines. In cases where the translator also acts as the timer, translation and timing are done simultaneously.

Typesetting

This part of the process refers to the task of styling the text: picking the colors, the font size, the position on the screen, etc. Typesetting plays an especially important role in shows where the speakers' lines overlap, as in the case of variety shows or live broadcasts. There are also times when translated text is overlaid onto an object on the screen, to replace, for example, the title of a book or the name of building.

Karaoke

Karaoke may be considered a subprocess of typesetting, but what differentiates it from the former is that aside from the stylized text, karaoke also deals with matching up the syllables of the words with the song featured in the show (thus the rubric of "karaoke"). A member may take on the role of both typesetter and karaoke, but in many cases, they are done by different people.

QC

While a series of reviews may be done within and after each and every stage, the final review of the output is called "quality check" or "quality control" (QC). In this process, the translation, timing, typesetting, and karaoke are checked for mistakes.

Encoding

Generating subtitles for a video may cause the file size to increase. It is the encoder's job to make sure that the video retains a reasonable file size with the best possible quality.

Distribution

Some fansub groups assign members to make sure that the files are uploaded and hosted in sites where they want them to be. File transfer, especially through torrents, is usually slowed down when there are more people who download (leechers) than there are people who upload (seeders). Members in charge of distribution make sure that the files are seeded properly.

These stages constitute the basic fansubbing process. While the order and execution of these may differ according to fansub group, this shows the general process that they follow, as well as the time and effort it entails.

Fans and media: A complex relationship

Given that fansubbing is such a tedious task, one is led to question what kind of person would endeavor it. This kind of activity requires dedication to the object of interest, a criterion that regular consumers do not possess. What this task requires is the enthusiasm and passion of a fan.

Traditionally, fans have been pathologized to fit images of the socially inept or, worse, the psychopath. This is evidenced by how they are portrayed on TV or in publications. With the words “geeks” and “nerds” as catchphrases for males, the immaturity or social inabilities of fans are highlighted by these representations. Similarly, female fans are often depicted as overweight and unhappy (Hills 2002; Jenkins 1992).

Japan provides a somewhat similar sketch of fans with the term “otaku.” At best, the otaku is often constructed as socially incapable of conversations outside his subject of fixation (anime, military uniforms,

trains, etc.), and at worst, he is thought of as a pervert, sexual predator, or even a murderer.

In the case of women, the popularity of the boys' love genre⁹ has also given birth to the term “fujoshi” (腐女子), which literally means “rotten woman.” This is because of her deviant interest in romantic or sexual relationships between men (Tou as cited in Aoyama 2009).¹⁰

While these negative images permeate society even to this day, positive constructions have also been offered by other scholars. Jenkins (1992), in particular, focuses on media fans and notes how their resistance to mainstream media has impacted the industries to which they belong. Moving away from the construction of fans as passive consumers brainwashed by the media, Jenkins asserts instead the ability of fans to resist impositions by appropriating what they consume and reconstructing it according to their desires. Writing fan fiction, drawing fan art, and making fan videos, for example, allow them to borrow characters of their favorite shows and use them to one's own entertainment.

In Jenkin's definition, media fans are largely female, largely white, and largely middle class. This, of course, applies to Western, mostly American, fans. Drawing from Jenkins, Kelly (2004) also provides his own description of what fans are. He provides six propositions for this: (1) fans are the most aggressive appropriators and the most brazen producers among consumers; (2) fans both know more and care more; (3) fandom is serious play; it is about one's identity, not leisured entertainment; (4) fans seek intimacy with the object of their attention; (5) being a fan can be a solitary private pursuit—or a richly collective sociality; and (6) fans test the limit of the excessive and the obsessive. They tread a fine line between the pleasures of fan-tasy and the pathology of fan-aticism (pp. 8-11). Kelly also adds, in giving these descriptions, that fans are inseparable from fandoms.

The rise of a more positive view of fans as media consumers is arguably brought about by developments in media studies, in particular, the development of the two opposing theories of media effects and media

uses and gratifications. Noticeably, these two theories also run along the lines of binary of cultural imperialism and hybridity, with media effects and cultural imperialism arguing that the consumer is a passive victim to homogenization that media bring, while hybridity and the uses and gratification model argues for the agency of the consumer. Morley (2006), however, questions the effectivity of these binaries, and suggests that there is more to the black-and-white categorization of the relationship between media and fans. Picking up on this dilemma, Bailey (2005) has come up with a new model for social selfhood, which he calls the “hermeneutic social subject.”

Steve Bailey’s hermeneutic subject

Like Morley, Bailey (2002, 2005) realized the weaknesses of the active/passive binary that media studies has prescribed scholars in studying audiences. He emphasized the need for a new model that could better describe the processes of self-definition and self-formation that the “easy binaries of the passive and active audience” (2005, p. 8) cannot account for.

In suggesting the new theoretical model “hermeneutic social subject,” Bailey draws mainly on George Herbert Mead’s ideas of selfhood and the neo-Meadian interpretations of Hans Joas, Ernst Tugendhat, and Hans-Herbert Kögler. He focuses on Mead’s ideas of the development and functioning of identity, particularly the division of the self into an “I” and a “me,” where “‘I’ is the aspect of the self that acts in the present and is thus capable of innovative action, while the ‘me’ describes the conventional aspects of the self, those that conform to the symbolic norms provided by the social environment” (Bailey 2002, pp. 2-3).

For Mead, there are two sides to the social self. There is the objective presence of the self within the group which acts as the stimulus to others; and then there is the subjective attitude of reflection which treats as an object the responses of the body to others in interaction. Mead has labelled these two faces of the self, which are continually in

dialogue, the 'me' and the 'I'. Both faces are social and only emerge together in discourse, but 'me' represents a unique identity a self develops through seeing its form in the attitudes others take towards it, while the 'I' is the subjective attitude of reflection itself, which gazes on both the objective image of the self and its own responses. (Burkitt as cited in Bailey 2005, p. 30)

This model thus explains that the process of identity construction involves both being an object and a subject, and that one cannot exist without the other. This interplay between the "I" and the "me" continuously creates and resolves problems, because "me" is subjected to the demands of social norms that he must comply with, while "I" calls for innovations and transformations.

Furthermore, Mead adds that "the self emerges through a secondary engagement with various forms of otherness"; this otherness starts from physically proximate others (parents, siblings, etc.) and later expands to a set of social expectations that Mead dubs the "generalized other" (Bailey 2002, p. 3).

Applying these concepts to media studies, Bailey labels media texts as a symbolic environment or a "generalized other" through which "me's" and "I's" of the self are formed. Bailey sees the appropriateness of this model in media research because it holds "the additional advantage of avoiding the persistent (and seemingly insurmountable) disputes among media scholars regarding the passivity or activity of the audience by resisting a binary between the subjects (an audience) and structures (mediated messages) with an argument that "the subject" herself is a mediated, reflexive entity built from (and thus limited by) "a set of communicative practices" (Bailey 2002, p. 7).

It is thus Bailey's model that the study employs in answering the question of what hybrid identity fansubbers form and perform in fandom. Identifying the "I" and the "me" in this symbolic environment is key to understanding the hybrid identities born of such activity.

Methodology

To describe the hybrid identities Filipino fansubbers form in the consumption and production of media, interviews were conducted with Filipino fansubbers. Finding candidates for this was a challenge, however. The anonymity that the Web endows its users, and the varying nationalities that populate fandoms made identifying the Filipino subbers among them a trying endeavor.

The assumption that a Filipino fansubber does exist comes from my own experience, however. While not dedicated to fansubbing alone, I have some experience in doing the said activity. It is also my familiarity in Japanese media fandom that allowed me to meet another Filipino fansubber, years before I became interested in doing this study. Armed with only this tiny scrap of knowledge and an imagining that there might be more of us, I pursued this topic.

My first approach was to post advertisements about this study in highly populated communities. This proved to be unsuccessful, however, so I took a bolder step by e-mailing fansub groups and asking them if any of their members were Filipino and would be willing to be interviewed for the study. This earned me more responses, and overall I was able to identify ten potential respondents. Out of this sample, only five were successfully interviewed, two gave favorable responses but were unreachable after some time, two did not respond, and one refused.

The interviews were conducted through the Internet because of two reasons. One is that the Internet is a medium that the respondents are largely familiar with. It is through this space that they are able to assume their identities as fansubbers, and their familiarity to it provides a sense of comfort and control. The other reason for conducting the interviews online is that geographic and time constraints made face-to-face interviews an unfeasible option.

Three of the interviews were done through an exchange of e-mails, where the respondents were given a set of questions to answer. In occasions

where I had follow-up questions, I e-mailed them back. One of the other two interviews was done through real-time chat and the other through an internet call.

To support the interviews, interpretive textual analysis of the fansubbers' fansubs was also made, although not extensively. The point was simply to check for consistency and to find details that could reinforce the findings from the interviews. The ages of the interviewees indicated in this article are those as of 2010.

Study sample

Interviewee 1: JM

JM is 24, male, and lives in Manila. He is single and currently helping in the family business, a liner bus that provides transportation between Dasmariñas and Manila. He has also studied the Japanese language and has passed level 3 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) in 2009(?). He plans to continue his study of the language in the future.

JM has approximately two years of experience in fansubbing, but he considers himself a novice in the practice. According to him, he has done tasks such as rough translation, timing, and karaoke, but he adds that these were mostly minor roles given to someone who has less experience. He belongs to more than one fansubbing community, and his subs range from Japanese dramas to Filipino ones. He also subs videos related to the idol agency "Johnny's Entertainment" as well as J-pop (Japanese pop) promotion videos (PVs).¹²

JM's interest in fansubbing began with anime, and from there he joined fansubbing groups. He answered to various recruiting advertisements, and learned timing and karaoke from senior members. He continues to fansub to this day, taking on "small" roles as he gathers more experience in the field.

When not fansubbing, JM spends his time watching anime and dramas, as well as listening to J-pop. He also reads Haruki Murakami novels.

Interviewee 2: Badstar

Badstar is 22, female, and lives in Manila. She is single and works as a preschool teacher. She claims not to be proficient in Japanese at all, but she has a fansubbing experience spanning six years.

Badstar is a dedicated fansubber of the Korean boy band DBSK (Dong Bang Shin Ki). She has followed the group's rise to stardom from their very debut, and it is her interest in them that led her to fansub their videos. Badstar relates that when the DBSK first started out, she found many other fans who wanted to understand what the artists were saying, so she looked for translators who can help her subtitle the videos in English.

Much like many artists who have gained massive popularity in Korea, DBSK eventually promoted their music in Japan. Today, THSK (Tohoshinki), as they are called in Japan, enjoys success in the Japanese music industry, as many of their songs have made their way to and even topped the Oricon charts. Moreover, recent developments have caused three of the five members of the group to file a lawsuit against their Korean agency over contract conflicts (Lee 2009), and it was because of this that Tohoshinki can mostly be seen in Japan instead of Korea today.

Throughout these changes, Badstar has continued subbing the group's activities, adapting accordingly. While she mostly did much of the subbing on her own when she first started, Badstar now oversees one of the most popular fansubbing groups for the band. As one of the group's founders, Badstar manages the projects the group undertakes, and checks the final output for errors. Badstar states that the group has around 150 members, housing different nationalities altogether.

Interviewee 3: Shiri

Shiri is 19, female, and, like the first two interviewees, based in Manila. She is a student of the University of the Philippines Diliman, at the time of the interview in her third year of Library Science. She is also a part-time research assistant. She says that Japanese media aside, her main interest in Japan lies in the language. She is currently studying beginner's Japanese, and plans to continue to intermediate.

Shiri says that her curiosity in fansubbing led her to study online tutorials and practice on her own. She started out as a timer in a fansub group, and from then she has tried different tasks such as quality control, typesetting, and karaoke, with the last two as her areas of specialty. Presently she is part of only one fansubbing group, which mainly subtitles the different videos of the Johnny's Entertainment idol group, KAT-TUN. To date, she has been fansubbing for five years, and aside from filling in for whatever task that calls for her skills, she acts as one of the moderators of her fansubbing group.

When not fansubbing, Shiri enjoys reading books, watching movies and TV shows, listening to music, playing musical instruments, food trips, and taking care of her dogs.

Interviewee 4: Fansubcrazy

Fansubcrazy is 38, female, and single. She lives in Cagayan de Oro and has two jobs: a full-time personnel head in a small-scale company and a part-time college and graduate school professor. She says she knows very little Japanese, and mostly picks up new vocabulary from fansubbing Japanese media.

Fansubcrazy has been fansubbing for approximately three years, and together with Shiri, she moderates the same fansubbing group. Aside from this, she is also in charge of encoding, timing, and quality control. She studied subbing on her own when she first started out, and learned even more techniques when she joined groups. Presently, she is part of

two fansubbing groups: one dedicated to KAT-TUN and the other dedicated to PVs and performances of various J-pop artists.

Fansubcrazy's interests in Japan include dramas and travel. Aside from doing fansubs, she spends her free time reading, cross-stitching, and hanging out with friends.

Interviewee 5: Jeffer

Jeffer refused to disclose her actual age, but she did say that she is in her 20s. She lives in Baguio, is single and a certified public accountant. She is also a JLPT 4 passer. She took some classes in Japanese two years prior, but due to conflict in schedule, she opted to study on her own. She plans to continue studying the language despite the slow progress.

Jeffer first started fansubbing by studying different software programs. After observing different fansubbed videos, she joined a fansubbing group and has continued ever since. She is presently part of two fansubbing groups: one whose works revolve around the Johnny's Entertainment idol group Arashi, and another who focuses on Johnny's Entertainment talent Ikuta Tsuma. Jeffer's tasks in these two groups involve timing, typesetting, quality control, and encoding.

When asked about her interests related to Japan, Jeffer says she is mainly attracted to its popular culture. Other than that, her hobbies include music, film, literature, and writing.

Findings

Fansubbing as a symbolic environment

In the neo-Meadian sense, fansubbing functions as a symbolic environment, a "generalized other" with whom the subject, the fansubbers, interacts. Thus, in "conversing" with Japanese media, they also converse with themselves and build an identity upon it.

When asked for the reasons why they fansub, the interviewees all claimed that it provides them a sense of relief or escapism from the daily routine of their lives. Despite the time, energy, and effort that fansubbing requires, fansubbing gave them a sort of “me-time” where they can indulge in their objects of interest and, at the same time, learn more about themselves.

For example, Shiri mentions that one of the rewards of fansubbing for her was that she is able to train herself to be more disciplined and work toward her set goals. She uses the toils and labors of fansubbing to test her limits and measure her strengths, which she notes she can apply to similar activities that require effort and discipline (studies, work, etc.).

Other interviewees also expressed the same idea, claiming that releasing a finished product to the rest of the community is a reward in itself. The act of completing something that took time and effort gives them a sense of achievement. Seeing the potential in “me” makes them actualize an “I” that produces their desired results.

The hybrid prosumer: A dialogue between the submissive “me” and the rebellious “I”

As mentioned earlier, fansubbing challenges copyright laws and legal distribution. When asked about this matter, all the interviewees confirmed that they are aware of the violations they might be committing in practicing fansubbing. Their answers show a sort of ambivalence—and here I highlight that there is a struggle between the “me” who must conform to what is expected of them, and the “I” who senses the need for a transformation.

JM, mindful of the law violations that he might be committing, said that he researched on the topic and found security in knowing that no lawsuit has been filed against a fansubber for this activity. He does add, however, that he knows of some fansubbing groups who have been cautioned by networks to stop. He says that if such case happens to him, he will heed to the request.

Fansubcrazy says she would do the same thing if it does happen. She does say, however, that she is willing to take down a particular video or so, but not stop fansubbing altogether. Jeffer, on the other hand, simply wishes that Japanese TV would be more forgiving in this matter, and made no further comment.

On the contrary, Badstar expresses a strong disagreement with the copyright infringement law. She says that such laws should distinguish between fansubbers and pirates because only the latter benefits from the work that they do not do. She goes on further to explain that fans “need a connection, something they can keep, something that can let them feel that they are not outsiders, and subs help them with this.” Furthermore, she faults the producing companies for expanding their merchandise without considering language barriers; while they sell their products abroad, they make no effort in adding English subtitles. She explains that the companies themselves profit from what fansubbers do, as it is actually their fansubs that are able to make fans out of passive or even nonconsumers. For Badstar, copyright laws should be reviewed in lieu of fansubbing and its positive effects.

Similarly, Shiri acknowledges the complexity of the topic and, like Badstar, sees the role of fansubbing in promoting artists. Her suggested solution to the problem is for companies to hire fansubbers professionally. She contradicts this, however, by saying that she cannot see for sure if there is a career in fansubbing since everyone does it for free.

The interviewees thus show that their fansubbing activities produce a “me” that is expected to comply with social norms—in this case engaging in lawful activity—but is reacted upon by an “I” who chooses to test the limits set by the law. Even more interesting is the empowered, autonomous “I” drawn upon an imagined producer in oneself. These fansubbers participate in fandom not only to be entertained or to escape from “real life” but also to find agency in assuming the role of producer and facilitating the distribution and thereby promotion of their favorite artists.

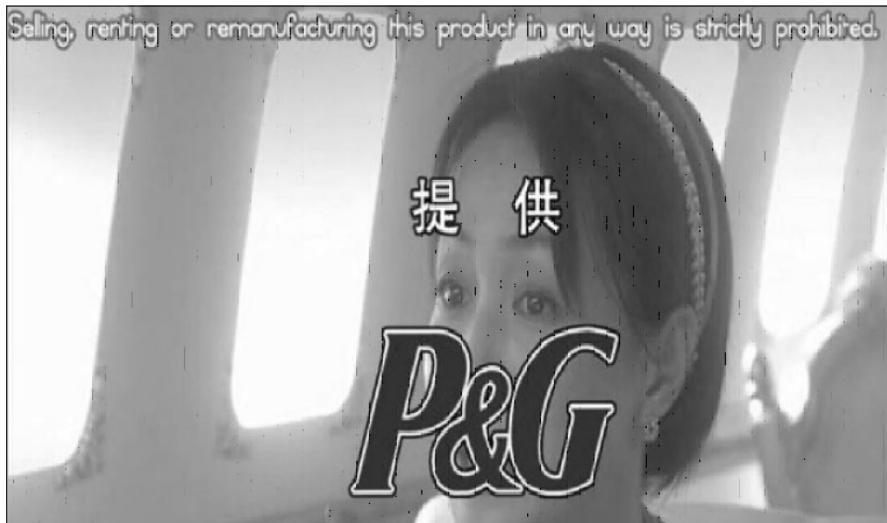


Figure 1. A message from the fansubbers prohibiting the viewer to use the fansub for piracy.

These views exhibit, in a postmodern sense, a blurring of the lines separating consumer and producer. The resultant identity brought about by the dialogue between the submissive “me” and the rebellious “I” in the symbolic environment of fansubbing is therefore hybrid—that of a “prosumer” who challenges existing models and understandings of capitalist production and consumption.

Engaging in transnational fandom

The interviewees find engaging in a transnational community of fans both rewarding and trying. All of them mentioned “meeting friends” who share the same interest as one of the benefits of fansubbing. They also find pleasure in receiving “thank you’s” for their hard work. Social relationships in fandom do not always go smooth, however.

For example, Fansubcrazy and Shiri identify conflict within the group as a problem. They both describe cases wherein members have differing

values that result in misunderstandings. Fansubcrazy notes in particular that there are people who are in it for the glory—a notion that places popularity and recognition over the supposed cumulative and cooperative effort that fansubs promote. It is also important to note here, however, that both interviewees who mentioned this problem belong to the same fansubbing group, and while the other interviewees make no mention of similar conflicts, it is inconclusive whether this problem is specific to their group or is a phenomenon observed by others as well. Nevertheless, it is a property worth mentioning.

Conflict with other fansub groups also exists according to the interviewees. Jeffer describes the Arashi fandom as competitive in such a way that fansubbing endeavors sometimes turn into a race to see who finishes first. Fansubcrazy also mentions that there is stress in being compared to other fansubbing groups who finish projects sooner than they do. In addition, Shiri mentions that there are those who don't observe this unwritten "fansubbing etiquette" where other groups should not take on projects that have already been "claimed" previously.

Shiri also mentions that other fans also become difficulties when they harass fansubbers into releasing the projects sooner. In relation to this, "proper fan etiquette" is again mentioned, this time by Jeffer, citing those who do not abide by the rules that the fansub groups establish. These rules mostly concern the uploading of fansubs to streaming websites such as YouTube. Fansubbers generally frown upon streaming media, as it exposes them to private companies who may be seeing them as violators of the copyright law and classifying them as competition that must be taken out.

For the same reasons indicated above, both Shiri and Jeffer note that people who profit from their work pose as problems. Piracy turns them into targets of networks and private companies and thus endangers their position as fansubbers.

What is interesting here as far as hybrid identity formation is concerned is that despite the differing backgrounds and values of the fans

within the community, there is a set of rules (though not always formally codified) that participants of the fan culture are expected to follow. This produces a sense of “me” that must adhere to the guidelines set by the fan community as a whole, lest they want to risk estrangement.

Rules
1. Please do not upload our releases onto online streaming sites that include but are not restricted to Youtube, Crunchyroll, Veoh, Dailymotion, Tudou, v.youku, dramacrazy, mysoju, asianice, megavideo etc.
2. Feel free to redistribute our releases the day after it was released on the community but please credit the team properly.
3. ABSOLUTELY NO HOTLINKING OF FILES. Please either direct them to the post at the community or the community itself.
4. It is forbidden to share our softsubs outside our community for purposes other than your personal viewing
5. For use of our releases especially our softsubs as a basis to translate into another language, please feel free to contact us via the jorsubs email jorsubs@gmail.com with "permission to use softsubs" as the subject. Also, please don't forget to state which language you are translating it into, the name of your subbing team --if applicable-- and a link of the site where you'll be sharing it. Of course, this rule is only applicable to OUR releases.
If it does not have the www.jorsubs.com logo embedded on it, and is subbed by another team, even if the release is found on our community, please contact the people responsible for them accordingly as this is outside our jurisdiction already.
6. Our releases are free fansubs for all. Not for sale, rent or redistribution for profit in any form.

Figure 2. A fansubbing group’s rules, published on their profile page.¹³

While it is also important to ask who sets these rules, such question perhaps needs to be explored elsewhere. What is important from the data that we have here is that there seems to be an expected abstraction of one’s locality to participate in transnational fandom. This is something that I will further elaborate in the next two sections.

Imagining Japan

Essentially, what holds these fans together despite their different backgrounds is their common interest in Japanese media. When asked about why it is Japanese media in particular that they fansub, the interviewees’ common answer is simply interest in Japanese media and popular culture, making no distinction of the society they reflect. All interviewees were aware that they are consuming cultural products, but aside from the language, interest in other areas of Japanese society, or the study of which, was not mentioned.

Aside from JM, the interviewees showed medium to no interest in Philippine media. While Shiri mentions admiring local artists, her interest does not lead her to do the same fan activities she does for Japanese media. Also interesting to reiterate here is Badstar's shift from Korean to Japanese media to follow the activities of the group DBSK. Such evidence suggests that the countries which produce these media are secondary to the cultural products themselves, and that they only serve as a background to make these images of dramas, music, or artists possible.

Cultural hybridity

Both the appropriation and consumption of English fansubs involve the imagining of an international community. As the interviewees have mentioned earlier, fansubbing groups are usually populated with people from different ethnic groups. In the same way, consumers of their fansubs also come from different countries. In such case, there seems to be a necessity for the fansubbers' abstraction of nationality or a particular locality.

Fansubbers' notes, as mentioned earlier, flesh out the presence of the fansubbers to the viewer. Not only do these notes come in the form of reminders or disclaimers; at times, they are also appended to explain to the viewer a certain custom or concept specific to Japan. Cintas and Sanchez (2006) note that this kind of practice is particular to the fansubbing community, as professional translation should "pass unnoticed to the viewer" (p. 47). In this manner, fansubbers act as intermediaries who are expected to facilitate the better understanding of not only the text but also the culture behind it. Sufficient knowledge in Japanese is therefore expected from the fansubber.

My many years of participation in the consumption of Japanese media has also given me the impression that knowledge in basic Japanese terms as well as culture-specific terms enables one to gain more status in the fandom. There are cases, however, wherein the overuse of which leads to the opposite effect. In any case, participation in both the appropriation and consumption of Japanese media requires a certain amount of

“Japaneseness” or, to a certain degree, an imagined Japanese identity in oneself.

This emphasis on Japanese culture in fandom somewhat subdues the nationality that the fansubber performs—at least in this space; her/his choice of what kind of English to use is also another proof of this abstraction. It may be observed that the English used in fansubs is neither too American nor too British, nor does it contain references to specific cultures other than Japan. While the ability of the translator may also affect this factor, such choice may also come from the idea that accessibility is considered by fansubbers. Not all viewers (and fansubbers) have English as their first language; using a culture-specific type of English would thus be impractical.

The Filipino fansubber—presumably as part of an international group—appears to be no different from the characteristics mentioned above. Fandom, as performed in the space of the Internet, does not require them to emphasize or capitalize on their Filipino identity—which is the very reason why they were hard to locate in the first place. I therefore argue that the hybrid identity of the fansubber requires an abstraction of a specific local identity, and capitalizes more on a fictionalized Japanese one, not to the extent that one is a native, but enough to assume a role that stands in for two cultures: that of the Japanese, and an international English-speaking community of consumers.

Self-doubling: Separating the offline from the online

The culturally hybrid identity described above leads one to question if such abstraction of locality extends to the fansubbers’ offline lives. Thinking along these lines would of course lead us back to the hypodermic theory of media effects, where media take total control of the passive subject. Similarly, if the answer to such question is yes, then the idea of globalization as homogenization would be proven right after all. The interviewees of the study, however, provide a different answer.

All interviewees noted that offline, they make no special effort in establishing their identities as fansubbers. They say that a close few know that they fansub—some of them are understanding and supportive, whereas others do not understand what they do or why they do it, or are otherwise nonchalant about it. Simply put, they cease assuming their identity as fansubber, or perhaps even as fans, when the person they are talking to does not belong to the fandom.

What happens here is what Bailey calls “self-doubling”—that the virtual community of fandom gives rise to autonomous selves that are performed only within the space designated for them. Bailey cites the fandom of cartoon *Futurama* as an example, whose online fan community is mostly described as “geeky.” Bailey explains, however, that fans of the show choose to assume such role only within the virtual community—the reason being that “geekiness” is socially undesirable elsewhere.

Similarly, Filipino fansubbers seem to abstract their Filipino identities only within the virtual communities they participate in. For them, extending such identity offline is pointless because it doesn’t provide them a connection with the people they interact with.

Conclusion

Fansubbing is one example of how globalization and hybridity go hand in hand, between different cultures, and between the overlapping roles of the producer and the consumer.

This paper sought to describe the hybrid identities that are constructed through the symbolic environment of fansubbing. From the insights of the interviewees, it seems that media and fandom as a community do facilitate the formation of hybrid identities. Hybrid in the sense that the roles of producers and consumers are blurred, redefined, and negotiated. These fansubbers challenge the existing notions of what consumers can or cannot do with the media texts presented to them. Hybrid also in the cultural sense, given that these fansubbers capitalize on an

imagined Japanese identity and an intermediary English-speaking one. This identity, however, is performed specifically within fandom. These fansubbers leave their virtual identity within the imagined walls of the fan community, just as they partially shed their offline ones to participate in online fandom.

This study has generated, in my belief, some insights that can help us understand globalization, capitalist consumption and production, hybridity, and identity formation more. However, much still needs to be done to explore the various aspects of fandom and how it is performed. With our increasingly media-saturated age, there is a need for more studies that draw away from the already dragged out discussion on structures. The individual is just as crucial as a point of study, and in saying so, I also highlight the need to study the plural identities that people form when engaging in relatively new symbolic environments, such as online fandoms.

Notes

- 1 This paper was first presented at the Second Philippine Studies Conference held at the University of Tsukuba in November 2010. It has undergone several revisions ever since, and I am grateful to the guidance of Dr. Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes and the insights of Dr. Raul Pertierra as well as the two anonymous reviewers who carefully examined this essay.
- 2 One popular example is Jan Neverdeen Pieterse's *Globalization as Hybridization* (1993), among many others.
- 3 Some dubbed Koreanovelas, however, choose to retain the Korean names.
- 4 I would like to thank Prof. Lily Ann Polo for pointing this out.
- 5 This, I argue in detail in the succeeding parts.
- 6 I chose fansubbers of Japanese media because of my familiarity with the community. I should also add that I have ample experience in fansubbing, and was, for a certain period of time, using the activity to practice my language skills.
- 7 For works related to the rise in popularity of Japanese dramas in East Asia, see Iwabuchi (2004).
- 8 Color coding becomes useful in cases like variety shows where celebrities tend to speak at the same time. The use of color codes helps the viewer distinguish who is saying what.

- 9 Boys' Love is a genre of media that features homoromantic or homoerotic relationships between males.
- 10 It must be noted here, however, that while "fujoshi" may be used as a derogatory term by people outside the fandom, some fans indulgently use the term to define themselves.
- 11 Steve Bailey derives from the neo-Meadian interpretations of the following: Hans Joas, Ernst Tugendhat, and Hans-Herbert Kögler.
- 12 Promotion videos are music videos released upon or prior to the sale of a single or an album.
- 13 The name of the group has been removed per the fansubbers' request

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Parodic Hybridity in Francisco Buencamino Sr.'s Music for the Film *Ibong Adarna* (1941)¹

JOSÉ S. BUENCONSEJO

Abstract

This paper discusses the organic unconscious hybridity characterizing the folklike appropriation that Francisco Buencamino Sr. and Jr. exhibited in composing the musical score of the 1941 LVN film *Ibong Adarna*. This extant Filipino film is an adaptation of the folk epic *Ibong Adarna*, which was written into the metrical romance genre *korido*. Generally following the convention of the staged *comedia* with its formulaic musical setting, Buencamino imitates diverse musical styles in the film from a number of exterior sources such as *comedia*, Hollywood, *sarsuwela*, *bodabil*, and slapstick comedy. In two important scenes, he intentionally “ruptured” the musical imitation by interspersing the *comedia* archaic speech style *dicho* into the music. This paper argues that by switching from organic unconscious to intentional hybridity in the said scenes, Buencamino highlighted the narrative structure of the film. In this parodic and ironic transcontextualization of *comedia* into film, the effect of foregrounding the extramural moral message of the epic *Ibong Adarna* materializes. This message centers on the endearing Filipino value for human relationships.

Keywords: parody, music hybridity, mimicry, media, Filipino values

“All parody is overtly hybrid and double-voiced.”

– Linda Hutcheon

Reading parody

PARODY, as Hutcheon tells us, is a reinscription of a past work into a particular moment of repetition (2000, p. 34). It affords an expression of the past with a different performative meaning—an enunciation—in the newer context. Thus, a parody “transcontextualizes” an old meaning into the new one (pp. 12-17). As commonly understood by many, parody is taken to mean “satire” because it mocks, ridicules, and scorns the “borrowed” original.² However, writing in the current modern/postmodern stylistic period when “quoting” and “borrowing” are ubiquitous and have been the norm, Hutcheon argues that there actually exists a range of pragmatic ethos (ruling intended effects, encoded in the parody, which the reader infers or decodes) in the act of parodying—that is, *sensu largo*. This can vary from paying homage to (source) “target” texts to ridiculing them as in satire. These effects hinge on the concept of *irony*, a rhetorical trope common to both parody and satire and which is brought about by two things: (1) the clash in meanings between old and new in the recontextualization and (2) the “corrective” evaluation or “judgement” of the “target texts” that the satires and parodies bring to the fore (pp. 52-55). Nonetheless, irony works differently in parody and satire; parody is *unmarked* (precisely because it has that range of pragmatic effects), whereas satire is marked by the ethos of mockery, scorn, and ridicule (as normally understood). In parody, the appropriation of a past text into another work is an acknowledgement of that source (and therefore motivated by the previous authority of the older text). Paradoxically, it is the recognition of this same authority that parody subverts or inverts (p. 74). In other words, in parody, a critical, “self-reflexive,” ironic distancing is achieved. The resulting text is “double-voiced,” for it repeats the old but with a new and different meaning.

This paper discusses the characteristics of mimicry and parody in the musical score of *Ibong Adarna*, one of the four extant pre-World War II Filipino films. Released in 1941, *Ibong Adarna* is a production of LVN Pictures owned by Narcisa Buencamino vda de Leon or Doña Sisang (1877-1966), a woman-entrepreneur who ventured into making films beyond the age of 60 yet made a tremendous impact on the history of the Philippine film industry, especially during the 1950s and 1960s. The film is credited as the first locally made film in the Philippines that garnered a million pesos in revenue and the first to introduce color technology. *Ibong Adarna* was also one of the first spectacular costume epics that benchmarked LVN Pictures as a mill producing film from history and folklore in the 1950s. It was directed by Vicente Salumbides, trained in Hollywood during the 1920s, with assistant Manuel Conde (1915-1985), now National Artist for Film. The film had Richard Abelardo (1902-1993) as cinematographer, who painted the sceneries as well. Richard Abelardo also trained in Hollywood and was a first-degree cousin of modernist composer Nicanor Abelardo (1893-1934), after whose name the University of the Philippines (UP) College of Music building is named. The film's music was composed by Francisco Buencamino Sr. (1883-1952) from San Miguel, Bulacan, who was assisted by his junior son in "scoring" (by which is meant doing incidental music and orchestration).

In the film, Buencamino's music mimics and parodies Spanish, American, and local Filipino expressions. Because the parody is "double-voiced" in the sense that the scorer borrows from other musical genres but mixes them to produce new meanings in the film medium, the epithet above by Hutcheon will, as shall be shown, be proven true—that is, *parody is necessarily about hybridity* insofar as there is an incorporation of the old to constitute another newer expression.³ However, not all hybridity is parodic.

As a concept, cultural hybridity or transculturation—a mixing of elements from various cultures—is a characteristic of cultures in "contact zones." In particular, hybridity is conducive to grow in colonial historical

contexts where cultural differences are bound to confront each other, hence intercultural negotiations ensue (Loomba 1998, p. 62). Setting aside the issue of the erasure of subordinated culture (owing to outright cultural domination in colonial/neocolonial/imperial contexts), cultures in contact more importantly lead to the two-way process of intercultural exchanges so that the incorporation of the cultural otherness into the receiving host culture produces an unstable, ambivalent mix, a *mestizaje* or creolization, so to speak (Gruzinski 2002; Hannerz 1987). Bhabha labels this act of cultural assimilation as “mimicry” but counterintuitively and “playfully” celebrates it because the desire to “imitate” or “mimic” the colonial language only produces a distance, a liminality or ambivalence that differs from and therefore destabilizes the dominant language (as cited in Loomba 1998, p. 78). In the context of this paper, *Ibong Adarna* is only half-Hollywood and perhaps should be described as “Hollywoodish” for in borrowing from Hollywood, the copy is not faithful. Obviously, *Ibong Adarna* displays the characteristic conventions of *comedia* from its narrative structure to its musical setting. Conversely, it is not “comedia” because the film medium is evidently Euro-American or, better yet, American Hollywood. The trappings of the American spectacle in the film are quite evident.

What Bhabha calls “mimicry” is what Hutcheon calls “parody.” According to Hutcheon (2000), “mimicry” denotes “imitation,” foregrounding more similarity between the copy and its backgrounded text. Mimicry therefore does not emphasize “difference” in its repetition. Yet because Bhabha meant that “mimicry” is not mere “imitation” (for subalterns do inject their own cultural resources to create hybrid texts), it would then be wise to stick to and use Hutcheon’s broadly encompassing term “parody” because in her terminology there is a clear conceptual distinction between parody and mimicry.

To understand the nature of the relationship between parody and hybridity, it will be necessary to discuss the different musical genres that Buencamino appropriates in the film and situate these in relation to the

film's narrative. As we shall see, each of the borrowed musics functions differently within the various episodes of the film's narrative structure. This suggests that the inferred intention of the act of borrowing is important to consider because, via this, a distinction between mimicry and parody is clarified. In this paper, I place all of these types of borrowing in a continuum between "imitative" (or mimicry) on one end and "parodic" on the other end. I will also discuss the performativity of this hybridity by exploring the agency that Buencamino, as "external film music narrator," demonstrated.⁴ If parody is overtly "double-voiced," then to interpret this enunciation in relation to the postcolonial, transcultural context becomes an interesting issue. Parodic hybridity can give us insights into how an asymmetrical colonial encounter—in this case, Filipinos and Americans—confronted and negotiated the difference of each "local culture" be that of the colonists or their subordinate subjects. Due to limited space, however, the paper cannot go in-depth into the political and historical context of this parody as this article is primarily a film music criticism.

At the outset, the film *Ibong Adarna* adapts the story of a well-known *korido* (metrical romance written in monorhyming, octosyllabic quatrain). This myth was supposedly written by an anonymous author during the mid-1800s, from a folktale that might still be existing in the Tagalog-speaking areas. The content of *korido* is akin to the theme of traditional hagiographic epics among present-day indigenous peoples in the Philippines as well as to the non-realist stylistic conventions of traditional theater *comedia*, *korido*'s nearest artistic cousin. *Korido* and *comedia* were very popular as secular entertainments in Spanish Philippine colony from the 18th to the 19th centuries. By the time the dominant European and then Hollywood film industry invaded the Philippine Islands from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, *comedia* was already a thing of the past, at least in the capital city of Manila. Thus it is interesting to reflect on the resiliency of the archaic *korido* or *comedia* idiom when it was inserted, quoted, or parodied in the American medium as late as 1940. Other theater genres, such as the European-derived musical theater

sarsuwela (also waning at that time), the lowbrow *bodabil* with high entertainment value, and even soupy melodramatic plays seen on stage and heard on another medium, the radio, were also mimicked. Radio culture was only a decade old when *Ibong Adarna* was produced.

The plethora of mimicked genres in the film reminds us of Bakhtin's concept of unconscious organic hybridity, which is the dominant characteristic type of hybridity exhibited in the film music score being considered (Bakhtin 1981, p. 358). Buencamino as a "bricoleur" scorer worked, in fact, like an organic hybridist who incorporated diverse styles at his disposal without problematizing the incongruities such juxtapositions created as a result. However, a close examination of this aspect would disclose that there are also appropriations made by Buencamino that go beyond mimicries or imitations in the film. The borrowings that I will be dealing with closely in this paper can therefore be considered parodies as defined above, for they mark an ironic difference that critically distances the performative recontextualization from their "target texts"—in this case, from the *comedia*. It shall be shown that these parodic borrowings function to enunciate the message of the narrative, thereby elucidating its importance.

A highlight of this paper thus deals with the parody of the *dicho* (archaic) speech style from *comedia* in *Ibong Adarna*. This is found in only two scenes of the film. An important question thus comes about: what motivated the film music narrator to "stage" the speaking by the bird and the *Negritos* using the then quite old *dicho* speech style in the said scenes? The parody of *comedia* speech in these films therefore articulates a difference—a rupturing, intentional hybridity (to recall Bakhtin's term that contrasted with the unmarked "organic" hybridity). This goes beyond the organicist cultural hybridity that Buencamino projected overall in the film. On this note, it behooves me to introduce at this point that Buencamino was not trained in Hollywood (unlike cinematographer Richard Abelardo or director Salumbides) but in the world of local band and church music and in the musical theater *sarsuwela* in Manila (Manuel

1995, pp. 106-115). He was “homegrown” (although he studied with Filipino composer Marcelo Adonay and Spanish peninsular Oscar Camps in Manila) and had direct immersive experience setting music during his early exposure to the musical art of sarsuwela (he was at one time an actor of this genre) and as a piano player in silent films. He was in many ways like a folk artist who appropriated existing genres familiar to his art world. Yet in the two parodic articulations in the film *Ibong Adarna*, a rupture ensues; he seems conscious of what he was aiming in those passages, having had some kind of a “homage” parodic intentionality—inferring what Hutcheon (2000) called the “knowing smile” (p. 63)—in the use of the archaic material in the said important moments of the film.

Sources of *Ibong Adarna* and the contexts of their production

The original source of the *Ibong Adarna* narrative is shrouded in mist. Believed to have been written and printed by an anonymous author sometime in the 1860s, the more popular source from the 20th century, particularly the version that came out in 1900 and which Eugenio consulted, is probably extant. While I was not able to consult this exemplar, the versions that I happened to come across in the main library of the UP Diliman were later versions, particularly from the 1940s. These are the sources of texts that are currently in use for literature subjects in high schools in the Philippines. The proliferation of *Ibong Adarna* versions today attests to its continuing popularity, and this may have stemmed from folklore studies initiated since the last half of the 19th century by the Spanish journalist Jose del Pan. Indeed, *Ibong Adarna* has seen many adaptations in film, the first of which was made in 1941, which is the material I am basing my analysis on. LVN remade another version in 1955 with a different set of actors and bent the plot to suit the audience's taste of that decade.⁵ The *Ibong Adarna* version of the 1970s also reflected the ethos of its time, a matter that we cannot go into here.

Examining the themes of this tale, Eugenio (1987, p. 166) observed that they combine three stories in a series: (1) the search for the golden bird; (2) the descent into the well and finding the captive princesses; and (3) the winning of the swan maiden, the ensuing obstacle flight, and the forgotten fiancée. I have marked these episodes in Table 1, which outlines its plot. Comparing these themes to the catalogs of stories collected around the world, folkloristic studies by Fansler (1916, p. 205), Villa (1952, p. 248), and later Eugenio have indicated that these are not unique to the Philippines but were borrowed from European metrical romances. With hindsight, there is something dubious about this comparativism. As we shall see later on, the issue of comparing the local Philippine version to its sources around the world is inconsequential because what is important to appreciate is how the sources have been thoroughly indigenized, a pattern that has been confirmed to operate in many Filipino mestizaje expressions.

The concatenation of different stories into a synthetic story thus manifests the orality of transmitting *Ibong Adarna* in the past, particularly in Tagalog-speaking areas. There is a strong possibility that the impetus to *write or versify* it into the korido form during the last half of 19th century was motivated by (1) the author's encounter with books on metrical romances from Spain, although the issue does not end there, and (2) the availability of print technology that fostered an incipient public sphere by mid-19th century. These 19th-century cultural developments were a part of the growing secularization in outlook of Spanish Philippine colonial citizens and thus representations of secular subjects that went beyond or were outside the control of religious institutions.

The eminent historian and critic of Philippine literature Bienvenido Lumbera (1967) had examined korido and *awit* in the Tagalog region,⁶ particularly discussing the interest that Tagalog poets showed in refining indigenous poetry since the late 18th century. Lumbera considered these as imitations of the verse style of ancient Spanish metrical romance, couching them as “refinements” that were seen in the local works by Jose de la Cruz (1746-1829) and Francisco Baltazar (1788-1862). Lumbera

implies that these would not have been disseminated without the technology of print culture mentioned above. Perhaps, the term imitation would be relevant to speak about the act of appropriation that local poets made vis-à-vis imported expressions at that time. These “refined” works were meant mainly to be read, as Vicente Rafael argued in his book *The Promise of the Foreign*. No *Ibong Adarna* comedia exists. Nevertheless, the characteristics of korido—stories culled from historical legends and folktale; set in kingdoms, exotic places, and sacred mountains; and displaying the poetic conventions of metrical romance genre—resemble those of the most popular 19th-century theater genre, comedia, which was patronized by grassroots Philippine society. As mentioned already, this theater genre was the parallel of literary korido. Comedia, however, was to be supplanted later on by the European operetta *zarzuela* at the turn of that century. And this, in turn, waned when American film was introduced to Filipinos during the 1930s. All these genres are a part of experiencing modernity in colonial Philippines. At the time, it spells out a public culture that took reading as an important leisure-time activity and a cosmopolitanism outlook that was to blossom into the Hispanic literary movement during the first half of the 20th century. It seemed to me that the maturity of Spanish writings during the early 20th century was some kind of a cultural capital defense of the elites as the linguistic domination of English slowly crept into the colony or metropolis. It is interesting to note that the producer of *Ibong Adarna*—Doña Sisang—was herself a Spanish-speaking landed aristocrat (from nearby rice-growing Bulacan province adjacent to Manila) who refused to speak English during her time. Publishing abounded during the period, and most of the materials had Filipiniana element to them. This humanistic interest in local things spilled over and is manifest in the composed and harmonized 19th-century Tagalog song, *kundiman*, whose status was elevated to art during the 1930s in the works of Francisco Santiago, Antonio Molina, and Nicanor Abelardo.

The introduction of the American film industry, particularly the talkies during the 1930s, thus provided another medium for transcontextualizing

what was already familiar in print, the *korido*. Because *comedia* was by then an archaic performance genre,⁷ it can be surmised that giving life to it through the medium of early Hollywood cinema was not consciously aimed at imitation of the foreign per se—that is, felicitous resemblance to Hollywood was the goal but something parodic because *comedia* (the target text) was, after all, almost going to oblivion, thanks to the “mimetically capacious” technology of mechanical reproduction that the Americans brought in and that extended its life. The pragmatic effect or sense of parody in this case is not mocking or ridiculing it, for it can almost be ascertained that this was of the homage parody that Hutcheon eloquently argues in her book. I will argue in this paper that mimicking Hollywood was practical to the extent that the producers wanted only to approximate its technique. The content was entirely different because the recontextualization of tradition was locally motivated. By then, *comedia* would have already assumed the status as a symbol of tradition. This paper thus considers an *unsettling hybridity* that resulted from a parodic recontextualization of a traditional Filipiniana material into the American medium.

The Narrative of *Ibong Adarna*

Ibong Adarna is set in a fantastic, exotic place in the Orient called Berbania. This is an Islamic kingdom ruled by a king who got ill after dreaming of social disharmony (symbolized by the eldest son plotting to kill the youngest, who, in Philippine society, is the pampered and the favorite).⁸ Parallel to epic poetry in hinterland Philippines (even biography of charismatic indigenous artists), the narrative is about the quest for a wife that has to materialize so the kingdom can reproduce itself. The search for the mythical bird is a symbol for this search for the kingdom’s posterity; the bird’s enchanting song is said to cure the king. It was the king’s youngest son, the humble and honest Juan, who captures the bird because Juan’s generosity equipped him with luck; he met the wise mountain sage who advised him that the pleasure of the bird song is attainable only when one undergoes pain and sacrifice to counteract the effect of pleasure. This

ethos is unmistakably indigenous Filipino. In contrast, his two brothers turned to stone, succumbing to sleep or forgetfulness, because they were not advised on the principle of balancing pain and pleasure.⁹ For the king, however, the bird song was health, but no song emitted from the bird because it was first handed down, back home, by the treacherous oldest brother Pedro who tried to kill Juan, his brother. Pedro lied to the king, his father, that he himself was the one who captured the bird. When Juan returned to the kingdom, the bird broke its silence and disclosed the truth. It sang for the king *in the presence of Juan*, his beloved son.

This newfound happiness did not last, of course, because evil crept once more in Pedro's mind. Pedro freed the caged bird while Juan was sleeping. This led to Juan's second journey in search of the bird again. This time though, Juan did not meet the bird¹⁰ but found a well that led him to the underworld. There he met a beautiful maiden named Leonora who was kept imprisoned by a giant.¹¹ Juan killed this giant and liberated Leonora. But parallel to the first journey, Pedro was there to complicate the story again for it was he who got Leonora in turn, literally abducting her for himself. Upon reaching the kingdom, however, Leonora promised to the king that she would keep a vow until Juan's return. This act bespeaks another salient Filipino worldview called *panata*, a promise to one's self in upholding human relations, despite odds. This devotional cultural practice is a ubiquitous and characteristic institution, relating to religion, family, and society in the Philippines.

Juan then goes to his third journey, flying with his brother Diego, clutching at the feet of a mysterious giant bird that brought them to the Kingdom of Crystals. Here, Juan met the bewitching Maria, a half-supernatural beautiful creature who did magic so as to save her beloved Juan from the wrath of her father. Like an enchantress from Philippine mythology, Maria drastically fell in love with Juan at first sight. Maria loves Juan, a human being, more than her father, and she eloped and escaped with Juan back to the Kingdom of Berbania. This angered Maria's father so much that he cursed her daughter she'll be forgotten by Juan one

Table 1. Plot outline of *Ibong Adarna*

Subject	Related object	State of the object	Salient performative
Episode 1: Juan's first journey to quest for the mythical bird →	bird (on a tree in Mt. Tabor) →	loss on the way home (due to Pedro's envy) →	presence of Juan to his father: bird song and dicho speech style
		loss of bird from the kingdom (due to Pedro's envy) ↙	
Episode 2: Juan's second journey or the quest for the mythical bird once more, descent into the well, and finding the captive princesses →	bird but Leonora is found (underworld) →	loss of Leonora (due to Pedro's covetousness) →	absence of Juan in the kingdom: Leonora's panata or song of vow
		giant bird appears ↙	
Episode 3: Juan's third journey or winning of the swan maiden, the obstacle flight, and the forgotten fiancée →	no specific object, but Maria is found in the Kingdom of Crystals ↓		
		Juan undergoes trials before Maria's father who wanted to kill him. Maria's magic saves them as they flee the Kingdom of Crystals. ↓	
		loss of Maria (due to her father's curse) →	Maria punishes Juan for forgetting: dance music and dicho style
		Resolution: coupling Juan to Maria and Pedro to Leonora ↙	

day. This indeed happened as predicted. Juan left Maria in an inn, and he returned to his natal kingdom. There Juan immediately forgot Maria when he met the faithful Leonora, both deciding to marry each other. When Maria heard about this plan of marriage, she went to the palace during the wedding day of Juan and Leonora. In front of wedding guests, Maria magically presented a dance meant to reawaken Juan's memory of his relationship to her. This allegorical dance led to the rematching of Leonora to Pedro and Juan to Maria.

In terms of narrative structure, *Ibong Adarna* exhibits the salient characteristic of folk epic in that it is cyclical—that is, episodes return to or repeat from the beginning due to a non-personally motivated loss (as fate or destiny is so construed). Thus, the narrative is epic-like and contrastive to the modernist overarching linear development of plot that is dependent upon characters' psychological involvements. This non-epic development leads to a climax and denouement that is characteristic of another genre, the novel. I outline the plot in Table 1, labeling the three-episode schema that folklorist Eugenio had observed. Columns 2 and 3 detail the reasons for the main protagonist's journeying. Column 4 provides the performative that arises from the loss of the desired object. In this table, one can appreciate the symmetry of the plot with its simple alternation of presence and absence.

The music of *Ibong Adarna*

The music of *Ibong Adarna* is heteroglossic. The juxtaposition of seemingly incongruous musics can be categorized into the following: (1) *picturesque music*, which creates the characteristic atmosphere of the scene being visually projected; (2) *action music*, which underscores tension generated by a physical action; (3) diverse genres of *production numbers*, which exaggerate the states and emotions of characters and are used mostly to heighten—as in a Hollywood musical—the spectacular aspect of the film; and (4) *melodramatic music*, which accompanies certain romantic dialogues of the film, simulating the Tagalog “soap operas” heard over the radio.

In concordance with the non-realist approach to the narrative, the music is “flat” or formulaic. Except for the production numbers in which the main characters display their emotions as indicative of their predicaments, musics in this film are generally matched to visuals mechanically. This is strongly evident in the picturesque and action music categories, both of which I classify as Group 1 in the continuum diagram (see figure below) that I will discuss shortly.

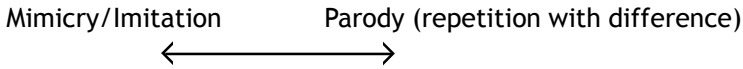
Palace music are of two types: (1) Berbania (home of the main protagonists) is stereotypically depicted with heroic music such as grandiose fanfare, chorus, and tenor solo intoning marchlike music (see music transcription), whereas the (2) Kingdom of Crystals (home of magic and mystery) is depicted by a long, drawn-out melancholic oboe passage with that characteristic exoticism of minor and augmented seconds (see music transcription). Both are in minor mode and are accompanied by drone-like sound or *ostinati*. In contrast, the equally distant Mount Tabor, where the mythical bird is found and caught, is depicted with a diatonic pastorale music in A major with a characteristic serene rhythm in even eight notes (see music transcription).

In between these places (palace and mountain) are various action musics that are also applied formulaically. Aside from the short fanfare of palace scenes, action musics are walking-outdoor music that uses an Arabic-sounding minor mode set to an *ostinato* or drone-like rhythm (quarter, eighth, eighth). (see music transcription). Vertical movements (like passages in and out of the well and the underworld, and the flight on the giant bird) utilize chromatic descending scale pattern played by string tremolos and drum rolls. Catching and stealing the bird is represented by *pizzicato* strings. These are all conventions of *comedia* theater, and they also draw an aesthetic affinity to the musics used in accompanying silent movies, where a piano player does not compose but merely uses preexisting musical passages to depict a wide range of visuals and actions from a list. In both, tried and tested formulaic musical passages are matched, recipe-like, to tableau-like scenes.

Analytical category	Musical style	Main function	Parodied genre
I. Picturesque music			
a) Palace	Exoticizing	creates appropriate atmosphere to painted visuals	comedia
b) Fanfare	loud and sharp brass music	transition in palace scenes	comedia
c) Mountain	pastorale in A major with contrasting section in E major	creates appropriate atmosphere to painted visuals	comedia
II. Action music			
a) Walking on the fields	exotic: use of bass ostinato/ drone with repetitive melodic kernel utilizing minor second and minor third	transition	comedia
b) Ascent/descent	descending chromatic scale	creates tension	comedia
c) Meandering horizontal movement of objects	up and down scalar motion (similar to Smetana's water music)	iconic depiction of movement	comedia
d) Stealth walking	soft pizzicato strings	creates tension	silent movie
e) Escape	appropriated score using Rossini's "William Tell Overture"	heightens action	silent movie
III. Production numbers			
a) Opening and closing credits	male chorus and male tenor solo singing a heroic march	framing device that sets the overall mood and theme of the film	Hollywood talkie
b) Bird song	coloratura soprano music	diegetic (or source) music	sarsuwela

Analytical category	Musical style	Main function	Parodied genre
	in G and C major; use of runs and arpeggios, non-texted.		
c) Harem chorus	three-voice female chorus in parallel tertial harmony (reminiscent of church cantora singing)	heightens spectacle	Hollywood musical
d) Dance of veils	driven by rhythmic pattern reminiscent of darbuka ostinato	diegetic music that heightens spectacle	Hollywood musical
e) Leonora's song (nondiegetic)		heightens spectacle by non-realistic portrayal of emotion	Hollywood musical or Spanish-derived sarsuwela
f) Juan and Leonora's sung duet (nondiegetic)	two-sectioned bimodality (minor- major shift)	heightens spectacle by non-realistic portrayal of emotion	kundiman in sarsuwela
g) Jesters' mime	appropriated score using recorded music of Brahms' "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 5" and Rossini's "William Tell Overture"	heightens spectacle by non-realistic portrayal of comical action	vaudeville or slapstick comedy of Charlie Chaplin as in pie-throwing
h) Negrito and Negrita dance	piano roll music in various style (rag to primitivist)	diegetic (or source) music	vaudeville or carnival (Black minstrel Show)
IV. Melodrama			
	appropriated score using recorded light classical music that feels like Russian ballet music	creates romantic mood	stage or radio drama

In all these numbers, the convention of comedia music setting is imitated. If we were to place these numbers as a group in the continuum, with the left end representing music mimicry (i.e., resemblance or “organic unconscious hybridity”) and the right end for parody (“imitated but made different”), the mimicked comedia music repertory would obviously lie on the left pole.



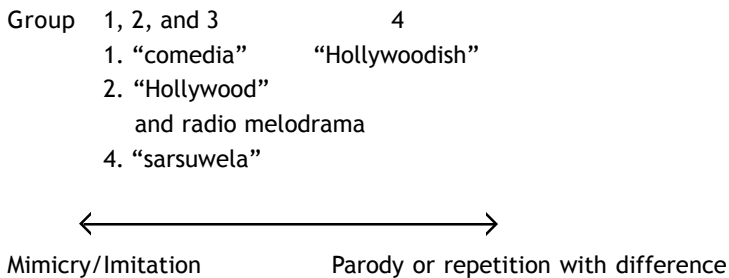
Similar to the musical numbers mentioned above, the categories of production numbers and melodrama are also imitative musics with less transparent intention to create difference. It is important to note that all these numbers in the film (Group 1 discussed above and Group 2 here) are *original* compositions by F. Buencamino Sr. What they imitate is not individual music sources per se but genres. If the imitated comedia genres point to a local source, those production numbers and melodrama in Group 2 point to transnational Hollywood. In the table above, we see this second group of imitative music in the grandiose music of the opening and closing credits, which is truly a carbon copy of the classic Hollywood “Cecil B. DeMille” music. Except for the use of Tagalog text in the march choral music of the opening credits, the music of the opening credits can easily pass off as a faithful copy of the corresponding music of opening credits in a typical Hollywood product. In addition, the use of recorded appropriated score (i.e., not dubbed live with the visual track) in the Jester’s mime and in the melodramatic scenes is blatantly imitative of Charlie Chaplin’s slapstick of pie-throwing variety and of Hollywood melodramatic romances (e.g., *Casablanca* or *Gone with the Wind*), respectively.

On the same left end of the continuum are other production numbers, now Group 3, that still imitate their “target texts,” although their origins are totally exterior to Hollywood and therefore can be considered local. Compared to the group of production numbers (Groups 1 and 2 above), these are all Spanish Philippine sounding—that is,

associated with local *sarsuwela*—than quintessentially American. We see these in the song and dance numbers such as (1) bird song, (2) Leonora’s devotional song, and (3) Juan and Leonora’s sung duet, which is in the *kundiman* style.

Another group, numbered 4 in the diagram below, is the production numbers that lie between the continuum imitation-parody. This last group can be termed “Hollywoodish” because they mimic Hollywood musical not quite totally because there is a hint of the local that marks them as different. These are (1) the Harem chorus, which is reminiscent of Hollywood musical, except that the parallel tertial harmony is reminiscent of the group singing of Philippine Catholic *cantoras*; and (2) the Dance of Veils, which seems to combine African dancing gestures (shoulder movement) with a floor pattern choreography reminiscent of the Philippine May *santacruzán* festivals.

To summarize, we can plot the four groups of music numbers in the continuum below:



Parodic difference’s interruption and composer’s reflexivity

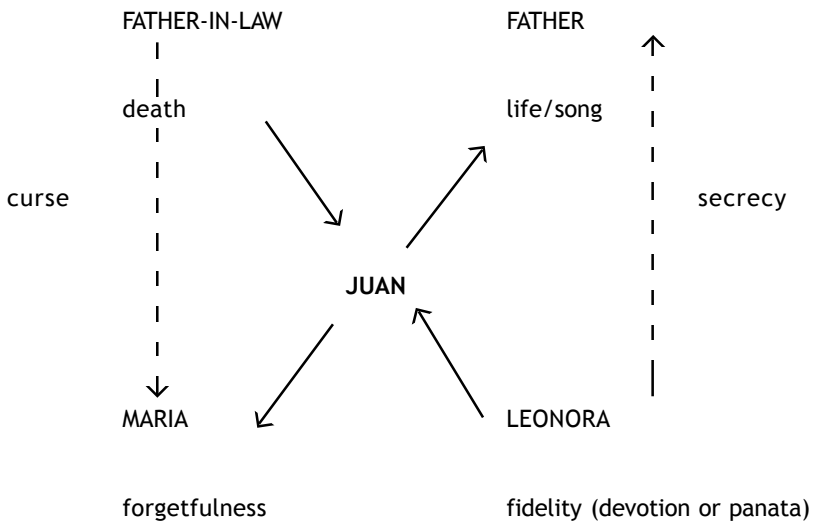
In two production numbers—notably bird song and *Negritos*’ dances—the interposition of the *dicho* speech style, between the musical/dance passages, creates a stronger form of marked imitation (compared to

Group 4 discussed above) so that in these numbers we enter the realm of parody as this is properly understood. Dicho speech style is characteristic of *comedia*, and its imposition in the bird song (which is soprano coloratura music associated with *sarsuwela*) and in the Negritos' dance (which is vaudeville or perhaps is modeled after a Black minstrelsy dance number, which was then certainly known in Manila) creates a sheer incongruity that is difficult to analytically interpret. This speech style is incongruous because *sarsuwela* is inimical to the archaic speech style of *comedia*. Thus, this parody is so collage-like. In the first, the clash between old and new musical theater is manifest. In the second, a clash between American vaudeville and *comedia* because the Negrito characters speak rhetorically in ancient style. Unlike the mimicries described above that simulate the styles of source musics, an answer to the question as to why difference was injected in these scenes must therefore be sought elsewhere, and it can be argued that this has to do with the shape of the narrative structure, an interpretive hazard that I now go into.

The difference the dicho style of speaking makes in the musical parodies can be inferred in terms of the anomalous subjects who speak in those scenes: a humanoid bird in the first, and black "beings" in the second. In such case, the archaic dicho speech style can be construed as a "foreign untranslatable" element that affords the focusing of the scenes by marking the imitation of *sarsuwela* and vaudeville expressions, respectively. The interpolation of these elements thus creates an uncanny effect. If one examines the narrative context in which the archaic speech is embedded, then one realizes the crucial roles these scenes play in articulating the overall theme or message of the whole story. Thus, when the bird speaks or the Negritos dance, the speech brings the viewer into a heightened mode of attention so as not to miss the importance of the message being conveyed. Let us go deeper and situate this to the structure of the narrative.

In the figure below, I made a schema so that the important scenes can be understood in the overall shape of the film narrative. Juan's relationship to his father is one of presence—read life and song—and the importance of this paternalistic filiation is underscored by the fact that the

bird properly sings only when Juan and his father physically meet face-to-face.¹² This scene is introduced by a nondiegetic introduction that contrasts with the previous formulaic action musics mentioned above because the musical introduction of this important bird song has what Levinson (2006) calls the “internal narrator’s agency”—that is, one that propels the narrative in motion, disclosing the inner states and emotions of the characters (such as Juan, his scheming brothers, and his mother). This introduction thus prepares for the special bird song in marked Spanish-derived *sarsuwela*. This marking is further motivated by the incongruous *comedia* speech style that the bird speaks in between the musical strophes.



In a parallel move, Buencamino as “film music narrator” sees to it that we also do not miss the other important scene in which Juan was made to remember his relation with Maria via the allegory of the *Negritos*’ dance. Again, one of the *Negritos* speaks in *dicho* style in between the abstract dance sequences. Structurally, Juan’s possible father-in-law (a supernatural for he is the father of Maria the magician) is the opposite of

Juan's real father; Juan's future father-in-law so hated Juan that he wanted him killed had it not been for his enchantress daughter Maria's intervention. When they eloped, Juan's father-in-law cursed them so Juan can forget his affiliation with Maria. By putting this dance scene enacted by beings of alterity, the author of the myth thus highlights the importance of the message. The highlighting of the message is marked by alterity in visual form (black little people *Negritos*) and in sound, thus the *dicho* style.

In this film, music does indeed play an important role in delineating the narrative structure, and the one who is responsible for it is generally the "external film music narrator" who is none other than Francisco Buencamino Sr. Unlike classic Hollywood, *Ibong Adarna* is a folk film, given its epic nature, and we can see the characteristic emphasis in the plot on it so that music for such film genre is articulated by the "external film music narrator" who stages the sound and visual in a static, tableau-like presentation.

Moreover, we can also appreciate how the film music composer is deeply versed in the myth, one that is locally constructed and not imported. Leonora, who is also in love with Juan, makes a *panata* (done in secret) not to forget Juan. Leonora expresses this devotion or *panata* with a song, which is performed with a visual intercut: Juan flies off to the faraway Kingdom of Crystals. In the segment, the syntagmatic contiguity of devotional song to Juan's flying off into the distant place, clutching at the giant bird's feet, is obvious.

That being said, we thus see in this film production the importance of the external film narrator—in our case, the film music composer—in highlighting scenes that give shape to the message of the film. A composer who is not Filipino would approach it differently based on his or her background knowledge of what is important to emphasize. But since it was composed by someone who had lived in Manila during the American colonial period, then it drew on the cultural resources that were familiar to that composer's experience of place and time. Buencamino grew up from a musical family who served the Spanish colonial plaza complex—

that is, inside and outside the church. Yet when he worked as a professional musician in Manila, he was introduced to the glittering and glamorous public secular entertainments that flourished during the American colonial period. By then, local *sarsuwelas* (a carryover of late Spanish entertainment) were in vogue (and Buencamino was one-time an actor for this stage). Later, he learned of the newly competing American medium, the silent film. Buencamino himself was a piano player. He must surely have been tickled by the sights and sounds of vaudevilles and carnivals, as well the talkies in movie houses.

In short, he was quite familiar with plethora of musical conventions of his times, and it is only understandable that he would use these, as a folk artist rooted to his colonial culture would do, to enter modernity (to use Canclini's [1995] felicitous phrase). By composing for film, he entered the global market, so to speak, hybridizing organically these idioms that ironically transgressed the canon of Hollywood classics. Buencamino was no Wagner who pretended to idealize the union of music and poetry as an ideological construct of 19th century's "art for art's sake," yet one who commoditized his works in Bayreuth Festivals.¹³ That belonged to another world. Buencamino was a musician who worked in a folklike milieu, negotiating the available idioms that range from mimicry to parody, the latter of which created a critical distancing, thanks to the rhetorical strategy of irony that enabled the parodist to encode a highly valued Filipino experience: human relationships. It takes a lot of phenomenological depth to discern which values as Filipinos need to be foregrounded, and Buencamino certainly hit the right music for the right scenes. In other words, he transcontextualized *comedia* into a homage parody using the American medium. This process brought the composer's enunciation of the message into more intelligibility.

Conclusion

This paper explores hybridity in a film musical expression produced by a Filipino at the end of the American colonial period in the Philippines. This historicized film music criticism paper may be new in Philippine Studies, but the subject of asymmetrical cross-cultural engagement between dominant Spanish/American *colonial* and *local* Philippine cultures is not. While there have been numerous studies on the vernacularization of Western musical genres and their assimilation into Philippine local musical idioms,¹⁴ what is often missed out in what may be called colonial “top-down” representations of cultural exchange is the attention to the creative agency of Philippine local culture bearers as they appropriate or “translate” borrowed outsider cultures into ones that wholly fit their local aesthetic sensibilities. This paper shows the postulate working in another form of Philippine cultural expression—that is, film—particularly among social agents who are located in a different social stratum (here among the middle class). I hope this paper is useful in that regard for it examines another postcolonial subjectivity.

In summary, the inscription of the traditional, epic-like 19th-century Philippine narrative *Ibong Adarna* in korido style into the American film medium in 1941 (LVN Pictures, Inc.) is of interest. An investigation into the music for the film by Francisco Buencamino Sr. and his son Francisco Buencamino Jr. reveals *diverse forms of musical appropriations* of conventional music genres that saturated cosmopolitan Manila at that time. These were connected to theater genres such as comedia, vernacularized European operetta sarsuwela, lowbrow entertainment bodabil, and even hyper-emotional stage/radio melodramas. These borrowings ranged *from mimicries to parodies*, describing on one hand the mimicries in terms of the heteroglossic, pastiche-like juxtaposition of borrowed musical numbers to Bakhtin’s concept of unconscious organic and, on the other hand, the parodic recontextualization of tradition that betrayed rupturing, intentional hybridity that conveyed the important didactic value in a heightened mode of expression, thanks to the rhetorical strategy of irony that marked the parody.

In the film music, Buencamino negotiated what is Hollywoodically conventional to this new, modern electricity-driven medium catering the market by creating a music that helped shaped the myth's narrative into an idiom that was familiar to entertainment fantasy that the *Ibong Adarna* must have meant to readers and viewers since the 19th century. As “external film music narrator,” composer Buencamino ruthlessly appropriated local and important musical resources but bent these to articulate an unmistakably Filipino representation of one's own cultural value. To reiterate, this manifests in two important scenes of the narrative: (1) Spanish coloratura song (qua the voice of the mythical bird) and (2) American dance music (qua dance of Negrito couple in the final wedding scene). Both mix archaic dicho speech style associated with comedia with contemporary musical sonorities. While incongruous, the intrusion of the foreign element in the familiar genres, however, has a sense, especially when seen in the context of its parodic recontextualization. They enable Buencamino to *mark the imitated musical styles with a difference*—that is, with Bakhtinian conscious intentional hybridity. I argued that the dicho style affords the highlighting of the speaking subjects of alterity and their messages so that, in the process, a clear Filipino ideology of presence is articulated. This cultural construction of presence is so enduring for I have found this in Agusan Manobo possession ritual, and it is also evident in this film. Its resilience can be accounted for by the constant rearticulation and maintenance of the said ideology in many local Philippine media—from bodies to electronica. The cultural value for devotion and remembering of self-and-related-other relationships is as clear in *Ibong Adarna*.

Looking back, the adaptation (or transmediatization) of the Tagalog narrative into film (an American medium) in 1941, some 80 years after it first appeared in print (presumably in 1860s), is of interest because the film version reproduces a parallel form of Philippine local creative hybridity. Just as the local print culture during the 19th century parodied ancient European metrical romances, 20th-century arts also parodied old things, as the new American electric medium of film did for *Ibong Adarna*. This is 20th century's marvel for, thanks to the inventor of moving images,

the ability to quote and see cultural value is repeatedly operationalized, although in a twisted hybrid recontextualized form.

Some cultural critics, however, were not happy with these borrowings since they always measure the local against external standards, such as comparing *comedia* with live performance by opera and operetta companies from Europe or violently forcing the local *comedia* to the poetic styles of imported *libros de cavellerias* (books of chivalry), which became readily available after the globalized traffic between metropole and colony increased with the advent of the opening of Suez Canal. For example, during the late 19th century, Spanish cultural critic Vicente Barrantes derided the Philippine *comedia* as inferior and derivative of European performances. He negatively opined that the locally transformed source texts are inferior because he misses precisely the point that although it seems that borrowing entailed homage to its sources, the resultant hybrid form is unique, for local sensibility is always a tendency in acts of parodic incorporation. These hybrid texts are therefore incomparable to that hypothetical standard or ideal, which is always already external to that hybridity. Recent journalistic criticism often repeats what Barrantes had said. The same negative reading of Philippine expression is resonated in a review of the music of *Ibong Adarna* in which Gidds Cadiz said that “the glorious music of Francisco Buencamino Sr. and Jr. *has warped considerably*” (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 9, 2005). What makes such a remark untenable is that Cadiz compared hybridized expression with its source in Hollywood. Again, standards are external to the indigenous arts’ aesthetics.¹⁵ For truly, one does not do justice to a hybrid text because it is already a recontextualized expression.

In this paper, I highlighted the nature of this recontextualization as more fundamental to understanding the music hybridity of *Ibong Adarna*. At a superficial level, the resultant hybrid expression can be said to be a *reflection* of the composer’s self. Indeed, this is true because Buencamino was quite familiar with coexisting genres heard in the milieu where he lived, from church and plaza of late Spanish period to the disembodied music of the age of mechanical reproduction in the early American colonial

period—that is, when listening to radio and watching films began to be a colonial habitus for urban Filipinos. At deeper level, however, it seemed as if composing for these “mimetically capacious” machines had touched Buencamino’s inner ear, for it did not matter to him to mix archaic speech style with contemporary popular Philippine music. In a way, his act of recontextualizing the familiar via the strange utterance of the “untranslatable” (the archaic element), producing a hybridity, brought about a difference to the parody and thus affording the body to see the enduring Philippine cultural value for presence.

An eminent literary theorist during the 1920s, Eufronio Alip had said that *Ibong Adarna* borrowed only the form of metrical romance; in substance, the myth expresses Filipino soul (1935, p. 15). If this is right, then it seems that by parodic hybridity, Buencamino reflexively saw his own self in the two important scenes. Through the ironic mixing of the strange, uncanny speech of bygone comedia into the familiar idioms of Hispanized Philippine sarsuwela and Americanized Philippine bodabil, he effectively expressed the reconstrual of the familiar. This ironic distancing reflects the content of the myth itself: the enigma of why the Adarna bird of unknown origin has a meaning to the Kingdom of Bernadia and why beings of alterity—the Negritos—had to dance in concluding the narrative. These strange things are necessary for, as technology of remembering, they facilitate the recognition of relationships. The presence/absence of the mythic bird in the story is a catalyst for realizing the imagination of a kingdom as an entity larger than the self (society), while the dance of the Negritos allegory reconstitutes self-other relationships that must be constantly upheld via discipline. Perhaps more than a “rhetorical strategy” then, irony (which is common to both mimicry and parody) can also be seen as a prosthetic device for clarifying the familiar via the strange. As a tool, it can even be made of use by producers and viewers consensually to *conjure up things* that have not yet come.

MUSIC TRANSCRIPTIONS (EXCERPTS ONLY)

Berbania Palace music: Fanfare and March music

The first excerpt consists of two staves in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The treble staff begins with a series of eighth-note chords and a melodic line, while the bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment with whole notes and eighth-note patterns.

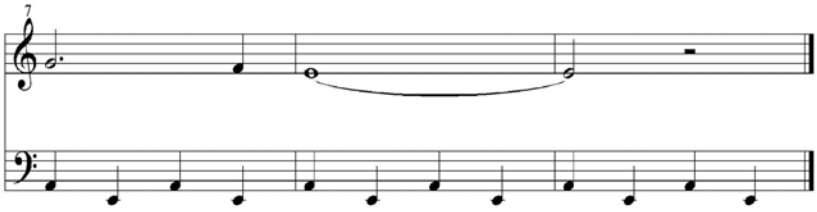
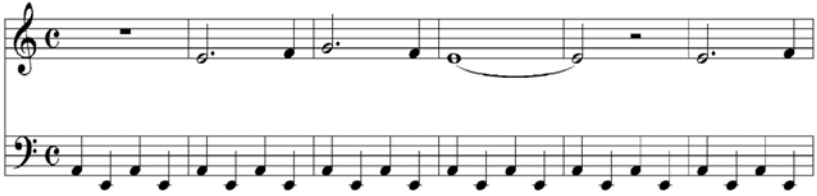
The second excerpt continues in 2/4 time with two flats. The treble staff features a more active melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff maintains a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Kingdom of Crystals

The first excerpt for 'Kingdom of Crystals' is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp. The treble staff contains a complex melodic line with various intervals and rests, while the bass staff provides a simple accompaniment with whole notes and rests.

The second excerpt continues in 3/4 time with one sharp. The treble staff features a melodic line with some rests and chordal accompaniment, while the bass staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

Walking music



Mountain music



Introduction to Bird song

The musical score for 'Introduction to Bird song' is written in 6/8 time and G major. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-5) features a vocal line with eighth and quarter notes and a piano accompaniment of chords. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the vocal line with sixteenth-note runs and the piano accompaniment. A final system (measures 11-12) shows a short vocal phrase and a piano accompaniment with a whole rest.

Bird song

The musical score for 'Bird song' is written in 3/4 time and G major. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-4) features a vocal line with quarter and eighth notes and a piano accompaniment of chords. The second system (measures 5-12) continues the vocal line with eighth-note runs and the piano accompaniment. Measure numbers 6, 12, and 12 are indicated at the start of their respective staves.

First dance of the Negritos

The musical score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of four systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef).
- The first system features a treble staff with a continuous eighth-note melody and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- The second system begins with a four-measure rest in the treble staff, followed by a melodic line with eighth notes and a final quarter rest. The bass staff continues with eighth notes.
- The third system shows a more complex treble staff melody with eighth notes and a repeat sign, while the bass staff has a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- The fourth system concludes with a treble staff melody of quarter notes and a final whole note, and a bass staff accompaniment of quarter notes.

Second dance of the Negritos

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in 4/4 time. The treble staff contains a sequence of chords and melodic fragments, including a series of eighth-note chords and a short melodic line. The bass staff features a steady, rhythmic accompaniment of eighth-note chords. The second system also consists of two staves, with a treble clef staff above and a bass clef staff below. Both staves in this system contain a few final chords and notes, concluding the piece.

Notes

- 1 Paper presented in the panel “Cultural Hybridity of the Philippines” convened by Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes in the Second Philippine Studies Conference of Japan, November 14, 2010. Original version was presented in Dr. Christi-Anne Castro’s panel on “Performing Tradition and Hybridity in Southeast Asia” in the conference of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, October 22, 2010.
- 2 This common meaning of parody derives from its etymology, *parodia*, in Greek, “counter song” (or para + odos). Another meaning of “para-” is “beside,” and Hutcheon (2000) emphasizes this in the context of her argument that parody is “double-voiced” (p. 32).
- 3 To some scholars, particularly those who do not recognize the “worldliness” of parody, hybridity cannot be imputed. But examining parody in the context of postcolonialism, the two concepts are naturally linked. Also, not all hybridity is parodic.
- 4 Levinson (2006) distinguishes this from “internal cinematic narrator” (following Chatman’s), which music can assume to be its agent. The “external film narrator” is the director of the film. The “internal cinematic narrator” is construable to the “narrator” that the narrative itself provides, whose agency is on the level of the fictional world that the “internal narrator” is narrating.
- 5 To explore the difference, the 1955 film version changes the villain from Pedro to his mother, who is construed as a witch, an outsider to the kingdom. The sibling rivalry would have been contradictory to the moral of the story, although the mother hating her children would have the same effect. Nonetheless, as the mother is an outsider to the kingdom, LVN in 1955 must have thought that this is a better solution than sibling rivalry.
- 6 Awit is also formal poetry, but it differs principally from korido by its dodecasyllabic lines.
- 7 For example, writing during the 1910s, Severino Reyes (or “Lola Basyang”) wrote negatively against comedia, praising the aesthetics of sarsuwela.
- 8 The 1955 LVN remake of the film changes the plot to the stepmother, who was a witch plotting to kill her son.
- 9 In my summary, I will skip mentioning Diego, the second son, because he does not play a crucial role in the main structure of the story.
- 10 And the story leaves the reader with no clue as to where the bird really went from then on.
- 11 In the 1941 film, Leonora was alone, but in the printed korido, she was with a sister.
- 12 The bird in earlier scenes of the film also sings to Juan in the mountain and also to Diego (Juan’s older brother but who is lesser evil), but never to Pedro who embodies the dark side of humanity.

- 13 On this issue, see Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song* (2009).
- 14 The latest and most comprehensive treatment on this topic can be found in the book by David Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Another study is by Christi-Anne Castro on the Philippine *mestizaje*. The themed issue on music hybridity of *Humanities Diliman* (vol. 7, no. 1 [2010]) is also useful.
- 15 In this review, many aspects of the 1941 film—from costuming and sets to cinematography—are compared with their Hollywood counterparts; it therefore seems an anachronistic reading of a hybrid text that demands a counter reading.

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Hybridity and National Identity: Different Perspectives of Two National Folk Dance Companies in the Philippines

KANAMI NAMIKI

Abstract

This paper will examine how Philippine folk dance performances by two state-sponsored folk dance groups, the Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company (Bayanihan) and the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group (ROFG), both resident companies of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), has produced and developed the concept of hybridity, a dominant narrative of national identity and art style/form in postcolonial Philippines. The two dance companies have developed different dance styles/forms and staging approaches, representing two contrasting traditions of hybridity, which have brought about different effects to form and inform national identity. By comparing the two groups, I will analyze how they show different perspectives on the concept of hybridity, and hopefully present the specific way in which the two groups and their hybridity form and inform a national identity through Philippine folk dance performance.

Keywords: folk dance, national identity, hybridity, performance, postcolonial Philippines

Introduction

“PHILIPPINE folk dance”¹ refers to a contemporary folk dance genre that has emerged in postcolonial Philippines and continues to be popularized as part of the national process of constructing national identity and culture. In a Philippine folk dance presentation, a variety of local dances that show Hispanic, European, and other Asian cultural influences are usually strung together into a program and transformed into a stage show. Philippine folk dance thus represents and embodies a hybrid cultural identity of the Philippines through its hybrid art style/form that conflates high art and folklore, modern and traditional.

This paper will examine how the concept of hybridity, a dominant narrative of national identity and art style/form in postcolonial Philippines, has been produced and developed in Philippine folk dance performances by two state-sponsored folk dance companies, the Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company (Bayanihan) and the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group (ROFG), both of which are resident folk dance companies of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). In a postcolonial climate in which Philippine culture has been injuriously seen as “fragmented” and “divided” after a long history of western colonization that has brought about drastic cultural changes to the country, Filipinos faced a serious identity problem. In this context, hybridity has been thought of in celebratory terms as a concept or strategy to construct and represent a distinctive Filipino national identity and culture, and Philippine folk dance has been used as a powerful medium for that purpose.

Bayanihan and ROFG, however, have developed different dance styles/forms and staging approaches, representing two contrasting traditions of hybridity, which have brought about different effects to form and inform national identity. By comparing the two groups, I will analyze how they show different perspectives toward the concept of hybridity, and hopefully present the specific way in which the two groups and their hybridity form and inform a national identity through Philippine folk dance performance.

What is Philippine folk dance?: Working definition

“Philippine folk dance” is a national form of dance presentation in which a variety of local dances are brought together into a program and presented through the medium of theater. To use the concept of two forms of hybridization distinguished by Bakhtin and further modified by Werbner (1997, 2001), Philippine folk dance is characterized by the combination of both “organic” and “intentional” hybridizations. According to Werbner (1997), organic, unconscious hybridity is a historical process in which “culture evolves historically through unreflexive borrowings, mimetic appropriation, exchange and inventions,” and it does not disrupt the sense of continuity; whereas intentional or conscious hybridity “shocks, changes, challenges, revitalises, or disrupts through deliberate, intended fusions” (pp. 4-5). In Philippine folk dance, individual dance numbers presented in a program are based on cultural diversity born of organic hybridization through years. When staged, these local dances are intentionally shortened in length, choreographed and stylized according to the western convention of stage art, and organized into a specific programming (which is aesthetically intentional hybridization).

When Philippine folk dance is performed at full length by Manila-based folk dance troupes, a standard program is generally composed of five categories or “suites”: (a) Cordillera, (b) western-influenced or “Maria Clara,”² (c) Muslim, (d) *lumad*,³ and (e) rural. Although different folk dance groups might use different terms to name these categories or present different dance numbers under these categories, this program format has been widely adopted by many folk dance troupes as a national form of representing Philippine culture. In the Cordillera suite, dances of mountain tribes in Northern Luzon, such as those of the Kalinga and the Ifugao people, are presented. Western-influenced or Maria Clara suite shows dances with strong western (mainly European) influence practiced among mestizo elites, accompanied with rondalla string ensemble. Muslim suite presents dances of Islamized groups in Mindanao and Sulu archipelago, such as Maranao and Tausug dances, which bear similarities in movements with those of neighboring countries such as Indonesia and Thailand. The

lumad suite is quite a newly created category in which dances of non-Muslim and non-Christian indigenous groups in Mindanao—such as the T’boli, Bagobo, and Bukidnon—are presented. Rural suite presents cheerful and playful dances of rural folks, such as “Tinikling”⁴ and “Pandanggo sa Ilaw,”⁵ which show unique fusion of western and local/indigenous forms of dancing found at a mass level. By juxtaposing both Western and Asian cultural heritages coexisting in the Philippines, Philippine folk dance successfully gives visible form to the hybrid identity/culture of the country—that is, a mixture of East and West.

Such a variety of local dances are then presented in a hybrid form or manner that intentionally adopts Western theater practice and aesthetics. Local dance forms are adjusted to theater concert stage, with each dance number set to beautiful and modern choreography and inserted into a flowing and well-rehearsed program. Technically speaking, a full-length program usually runs for about two hours, including a 10-15-minute intermission, and comprises a total of 25-30 dance numbers from the different suites. Each dance is shortened to 3-5 minutes, and presented one after the other, without breaks in between, in a visual, musical, and choreographic medley. Accordingly, dancers change their colorful costumes and accessories for every dance number, creating a kaleidoscopic effect for the audience. In short, local dances are completely framed and presented as a stage show.

Philippine folk dance in historical perspective: Changing discourses

Philippine folk dance, which presents both western and Asian cultural elements visible in local dance traditions, brings the country’s colonial past to the fore. The Christian-Filipino representation of folk dance, although claimed to be uniquely “ours” or “Filipino” and not something just borrowed from the West, is quite unique in Southeast Asia. The age-old classical or court dances of many other Southeast Asian countries are presented as national and worthy of preservation, and do not show any trace or evidence of colonial past.

The formation and early development of Philippine folk dance cannot be separated from postcolonial discourse on decolonization and reorientation to Asian identity of Filipinos. The long colonial history of the country changed its cultural landscape drastically, and Filipinos very much leaned toward western culture. Although geographically located in Southeast Asia, the Philippines was perceived to be closer culturally to Latin America. However, as a newly independent nation-state in Southeast Asia, there was an urgent need to establish a prominent, universally recognized national existence, and reconstruct its own national history and tradition by tracing back its precolonial or pre-Hispanic past. But unlike many other Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines has no ancient monument or ruin that shows the existence of a powerful ancient kingdom and glorious past before the arrival of Spain. This made it difficult for Filipinos to trace back their cultural roots or origins to the ancient past and use them as a source of national unity and pride.

The lack of solid cultural grounding or base for constructing and defining Filipino-ness has generated and complicated an identity problem in postcolonial Philippines. In this context, traditional dance, which is handed down from generation to generation since time immemorial, and consists of body, movement, dress, and music that are able to convey unique Filipino culture, has served as a significant medium in searching for and constructing a national Filipino identity.

Formation of program: “Identity crisis”

The basic, standard program format of the Philippine folk dance was not accidentally created but was based on a bitter postcolonial experience that featured the earnest involvement of Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company, which was formally founded in 1957 at the Philippine Women’s University (PWU).⁶ In the Philippines, the first revival movement of folk dances and songs started as early as the 1930s, in which Francisca Reyes Aquino, who later became known as a pioneer researcher of folk dances in the Philippines, has played a central role. Dances collected and revived during this period, however, were largely derived from lowland

Christian Filipinos (see Aquino 1953-1975; Tolentino 1946). In 1954, PWU sent its dance group, which was later named Bayanihan, as a delegation to the Asian Festival of Dance and Music held in Dacca, East Pakistan.⁷ There the group presented a series of “folk” dances of Christian Filipinos,⁸ with guitar accompaniment.⁹ As might easily be imagined, their performance stood out from the other participant groups who displayed their distinctive Asian cultures. The PWU delegation recalled that other countries were better able to preserve their own culture while the Philippines were so influenced by the West that they seemed to be “outsiders, among fellow Asians” (de Guzman 1987, p. 81).

This eye-opening experience made the folk dance pioneers in the 1950s very much aware of what they called “identity crisis” (de Guzman 1987, p. 81). It made them self-critical of Filipino cultural identity as well as colonial mentality, and they actively reoriented themselves to their Asian cultural heritage. After returning from the trip, the PWU group organized its own research team to dig out little-known ethnic dances of the Cordillera and Mindanao regions (which consisted, for the most part, the “ethnic” dance repertoire of Bayanihan) and produced a new dance program (Santos 2004, pp. 7-13).

Adoption of Western stage art: Reaction to colonialism

Bayanihan also invented a new hybrid form by adopting Western theater conventions and possibilities to present local folklore. The primary purpose for this was to “suit the format of a sophisticated contemporary theatrical performance” (Bayanihan Folk Arts Foundation 1987, p. 14) and raise local folk dances to the level of stage art, or “high” art, in order to display the same level of Western “civility” or “modernity” in the Philippines. For postcolonial Philippines in the Third World, there was an urgent need to reconstruct a national identity that had been constructed in a negative light as “immature” or given a negative stereotype by the West during the previous colonial period. Local dances were beautifully stylized and choreographed for stage performance, and the basics of ballet, such as foot-and-arm positions and body posture, were applied to local dance

movements. Old photographs very well show this point: a Bayanihan dancer's body is always pulled up, the chin kept up, and the toes frequently pointed. Local costumes were also especially redesigned for stage use by sewing several pieces that constituted a set of traditional attire. These were formed by incorporating zippers and Velcro to facilitate quick costume changes. What is known as the "Maria Clara" costume was restyled by Bayanihan by sewing a blouse and a skirt together into one single dress. Tribal costumes were also redesigned to be modern and fashionable by exaggerating some ethnic motifs or icons while disregarding others or by replacing them with geometric motifs that may have nothing to do with the ethnic group the company represents but effectively project a tribal image. Added to these, simple dances were elaborated upon and orchestrated in a large-scale, spectacular dance production. A good example is the dance "Singkil," which is named after the brass anklets used in the original dance that Bayanihan researched.¹⁰

The "Singkil" dance of the Maranao: Bayanihan's innovation

"Singkil" is one of Bayanihan's signature dances derived from the Maranao, a Mindanao Muslim ethnolinguistic group. This is widely known today as the royal dance of a prince and a princess weaving in and out of crisscrossed bamboo poles that are clapped in syncopated rhythm; while the man manipulates a sword and shield, the woman artfully twirls a pair of fans. In the original context, according to Bayanihan's interpretation, it was performed by women only, with the principal dancer being of royal blood. She is supported by her attendants, one of whom holds an umbrella over the princess's head, while the other women clap a set of crisscrossed bamboo poles.

The "Singkil" was first researched by Henrietta Ele-Hoffer together with Lucrecia Urtula, a dance director of Bayanihan in the mid-1950s. Hoffer became the first "Singkil" dancer of the Philippine Women's University even before Bayanihan was so named. According to her, the "Singkil" dancer whom she researched, Bae Tarhata Alonto of Lanao,¹¹ manipulated three fans in each hand.¹² Later on, the dance was set into a

storyline based on an episode of the *Darangan* epic: Bantugan, a Maranao prince noted for his amorous exploits, is finally captivated by the lovely princess Gandingan whom he pursues in courtship. But the *diwata*, or guardian spirits that hover over the forest, in order to punish Bantugan for his erstwhile philanderings, beset his path with difficulties, causing a heaving of the earth and clashing of rocks that hinder his pursuit of the princess (Bayanihan's interpretation).¹³ In this rendering, the prince has a contingent of male warriors/assistants (counterparts of the princess's court ladies) that serve as background fan dancers who simulate the waves of the sea with their movements. According to Trimillos (1988, p. 110), the fan dance is an incursion from another dance of a different Muslim group, allegedly the *daling-daling* from the Tausug of Sulu archipelago. All these different elements—the original all-woman “Singkil” dance, the *Darangan* epic, and the *daling-daling* fan dance—have been incorporated into the Bayanihan “Singkil,” which is now the more recognized, iconic, and popular “Singkil” dance compared with the far less-known original.

With such theatricalization, local Filipino folk dances that were previously a part of physical education or of social/cultural events of village communities were recreated into a spectacular theater production and brought to the world as part of a burgeoning national discourse.

In 1958, Bayanihan presented a Philippine folk dance production at the Brussels Expo and received international recognition. Bayanihan's success at the world stage made Philippine folk dance, as well as Bayanihan, world famous. Inspired by the company, many folk dance groups, some of which already existed and others newly formed, went for cultural and diplomatic missions abroad.¹⁴ As Trimillos stated, “the Philippine was one of the first Asian nations to use dance as a primary means of establishing international standing” (1985, p. 104) to project and promote a new, “beautiful” image of the Philippines around the world. This subsequently brought about what Trimillos called an “era of dance diplomacy” in the 1960s and 1970s (1985, p. 104).

The ‘Imeldific’ influence: Emphasis on a hybrid art form

During the Marcos regime (1965-1986), Philippine folk dance became a powerful and effective political tool to convey and promote state ideology. Regardless of whether it was good or bad, it was the first time that the state invested in culture and arts in visible ways, and presented a clear vision of “national” arts and culture. Then first lady Imelda Marcos established and inaugurated two national theaters—the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1969 and the Folk Arts Theater in 1974—which have provided venues for both international and local artists. Imelda also actively organized cultural events that created many performance opportunities. Although she was often accused of extravagance, she played a significant role in the development of culture and the arts in this developing country where the priority has always been given to economic development.

In her speech at the inauguration of the CCP, Imelda mentioned the identity crisis of Filipinos after the long history of colonization and stated:

we are young and struggling to understand ourselves, trying to construct noble meaning of our race. It is the purpose of the Center to enrich the minds and spirits of our people and to foster among other people a true understanding of the Filipino self. (Maramag 1982, p. 35)

She intended to foster pride in Philippine cultural heritage, and encouraged local artists to create new Filipino arts by utilizing native elements and themes within the framework of western art. Philippine folk dance thus became one of the ideal examples of such art work.

Under the patronage of Imelda Marcos, conscious hybridization of western/high arts and indigenous/folk arts were carried out in search for national identity of Filipinos, and Bayanihan became one of her favorite dance companies as she liked grandiose and spectacular performances with world-class artistry. The more grandiose and spectacular Bayanihan’s performances became, the more Imelda favored the company. Accordingly, Bayanihan became more theatricalized and inclined to be more western oriented or cosmopolitan. Under this circumstance, Bayanihan has

established its reputation and dominant status in the field of Philippine folk dance, and the “Bayanihan model” of Philippine folk dance became dominant. In 1982, Bayanihan became a resident company of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Post-Marcos period: “Filipinization” movement

When Marcos was ousted in 1986 through the EDSA People Power Revolution, the CCP, a brainchild of Imelda, was internally reorganized and came up with new orientations. In previous years, the CCP has geared to be more western oriented and elite centered, regardless of Imelda’s populist appeals. Only selected artists could mount the stage of the CCP, Obusan admitted. But the new policies emphasized “Filipinization,” pluralism of aesthetics, and democratization. The new CCP began to encourage Filipino artists to create and develop original works and new art forms “deriving primarily from indigenous traditions and secondarily from foreign offerings,” while embracing and understanding cultural diversities of Filipinos to promote the “pluralism of aesthetics” in the performances of CCP resident companies (Sta. Maria 1999, p. 34). Under this new cultural discourse and new policies of the CCP, the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group was elevated to the level of resident folk dance company of the CCP in 1986.

The ROFG was founded in 1972 by Ramon Obusan, a former researcher-dancer of Bayanihan since 1964. Familiar with methods in anthropological research, he became one of the earliest critics of Bayanihan as he witnessed his researched dances being made more elaborate and theatricalized, divorcing them from the original dances found in the field. Although he admitted that Bayanihan’s presentation was beautiful and effectively propagated Filipino dance culture, he began to feel that there must be another way to achieve the propagation of Filipino culture—in a manner that faithfully represents the dance close to the form as he originally saw it in the field. For this reason, he departed from Bayanihan and founded his own dance group that tries to mirror Filipino traditions and culture as close as possible to the original form of dance based on vast amount of

data and artifacts that Obusan and his group have accumulated through continuous researches. However, as Obusan recalled, it was not easy to compete with Bayanihan at the time because Bayanihan was the favorite dance troupe of Imelda who preferred grandiose and spectacular performances (ably delivered by Bayanihan), and almost every folk dance groups followed Bayanihan.

The ROFG's rise provided an alternative dance style and staging approach to Philippine folk dance, and the discourse has seemingly shifted to hybridization of "modern" and "traditional" elements in Philippine folk dance. The oppositional trends that the two dance companies represent have added new dynamics or "tensions" to the field of Philippine folk dance where the Bayanihan style once held dominance.

Bayanihan and ROFG contrasted: Two traditions of hybridization

The dance styles and performances of the two companies have evolved through the years, but basic representational strategies of Bayanihan and ROFG can be roughly explained by the concepts of "essentialization" and "particularization," to borrow the terms of Shay (2002, pp. 14-17). In Bayanihan performances, cultural details or unique locality and identity of different ethnic/cultural groups appear to be generalized and reduced to represent one essentialized nation or a single national character. On the contrary, the ROFG uses authentic details of movements, costumes, and music to particularize a unique culture and identity of each ethnic/cultural community, emphasizing a multicultural nation. These distinctions between the two folk dance companies can be best observed in dance movements, dancer's physicality, costumes, and staging approaches/technologies.

Dance movements

As I have mentioned earlier, Bayanihan applied basic ballet posture and foot-and-arm positions even to ethnic dance movements. Since local

dance movements have been “balleticized,” to borrow the term of Shay (2002, p. 15), the dancer’s body is always consciously pulled up, the chin is kept up, the toes are frequently pointed regardless of what dances and ethnic/cultural communities the company represents, and the graceful body lines emphasize refined and flawless movement.

On the contrary, Obusan dancers change their body postures and attitudes according to dances and ethnic communities that the group represents so as to reflect a traditional manner of dancing as well as local aesthetics. The ROFG tries to lessen the effects of ballet and carefully imitate the movements of local/native performers not only by looking at patterns of dance steps and hand/arm movements of the original but also by trying to capture the posture and attitude of native dancers.

To the untrained eye of the audience, Bayanihan and ROFG might look similar, but if one actually goes through the process of learning dances, the differences become quite clear. The ROFG dance is quite tough to execute because the body parts that a dancer uses and moves, or the kinesthetic senses that a dancer has to develop, vary according to dances, and the group is meticulous in executing even small, nuanced movements, which might not be seen from the audience. One will know that the Bayanihan dances are much easier to execute because they are based on balletic form that is the basis for many of the western-derived dances, thus blurring the distinctiveness of local dances.

Take, for example, the “Pangalay” dance of Sulu. In the ROFG, the so-called broken-arm movement unique to the dance must be properly and beautifully executed. The broken-arm movement, common to Thai and Balinese dance styles, emphasizes a curve of the fingers and arm. The more curved and arched the line of the arm, the better and more beautiful it is. Flexibility of the joints is of utmost importance, but for those who do not have enough flexibility, it is a difficult task. The mincing/shredding (choppy/shrugging) movement of the shoulder also requires to shake the shoulder up and down, either the right shoulder or the left, sometimes as fast as possible and sometimes to the beat of the music. If it is both shoulders, it will be much easier; but if separate shoulder and faster, the

movement becomes more difficult. However, in Bayanihan, the skillful movements of the hands and arms and nuanced tenderness of the dance, when balleticized, become reduced to simple, large circular movements that are sharply executed with disruptive accents. The nuanced and minute movements are made bigger, and engulfed by the form of ballet.

The ROFG dancers are also taught to embody “natural” grace as exhibited by local performers. Therefore, their dance movements look so natural but seem to have no dynamics and, in short, might give the impression of being “ordinary” or “unprofessional,” thus unattractive to the general audience. This is misleading because their natural and seemingly effortless “non-artificial” movements actually result from continuous training and practice, and it is, in fact, more difficult to achieve “ordinariness.” I have seen many Obusan dancers who have acquired or internalized different kinesthetic senses of “other” ethnic/cultural communities in their own bodies and made them into something their own.

Dancer’s physicality

The Bayanihan dancers have similar faces and body shapes since dancers are carefully screened and selected to conform with the company’s standards in terms of height, body shape, skin complexion, age, and facial features—meaning, they must subscribe to a certain standard of beauty. When the similarity in physique is combined with their uniform movements and costumes and their precision on stage, a somewhat visually appealing image is created.

On the contrary, Obusan dancers are unsorted. As Obusan stated:

other groups present the Filipinos as such strikingly beautiful people that it resembles a beauty pageant. I don’t go for that kind of show.... My dancers have typical faces of typical Filipinos. (Balce 1998, p. 55)

In the Obusan group, there are various types of faces with all sorts of body types: mestizo and *moreno* (fair- and brown-skinned), tall and

small, thin and fat, and little kids to dancers in their 40s. Today, Obusan has Batang ROFG (ROFG kids) group, each member of which is trained to become a “musician-dancer” who can both dance and play music since early age. This wide range of physical types and ages is effectively put to use in portraying “real-life” people, enabling the group to produce a wider range of dance repertoires and productions. For example, in staging a Tausug (Jolo, Sulu) child wedding ritual, the stage is filled with a large number of children who perform different kinds of “Pangalay” dance. The children’s unlearned dance movements are perfect for creating an illusion of a real ritual in the field.

Costumes

As I have mentioned earlier, the Bayanihan costumes are especially redesigned for stage use, and well fitted to dancer’s body to emphasize the body line. The company has modernized and modified costumes by blurring cultural specificity of each ethnic group, and this often makes it difficult to identify the respective ethnic communities they represent, but their costumes still retain some essence of certain ethnic/cultural groups and capture the look of traditional attires.

In the ROFG, costumes, hair and body accessories, and hand props are also kept in their original or traditional forms as much as possible, and the respective costumes are used for ethnic/cultural communities. Some of them are antique pieces collected by Obusan, while other items are reproduced by the locals/natives of the area being represented—for example, weaves that they produce for commercial purpose. The ROFG sometimes duplicates the original based on careful research and close imitation. Naturally, many of the group’s costumes are not specially designed for stage use and for the dancer’s body. Therefore, certain techniques are required to put on and take off a complete set of costume and accessories within the short period of time allowed for changing outfits in between dances, and dancers also learn techniques in properly manipulating on stage the “non-stage-adapted” costumes, especially elegant Filipina gowns with long trail at the back.

Staging approaches/technologies

The Bayanihan's performance is beautifully interpreted, restaged, and presented for its artistic and entertainment quality. Bayanihan has sought to consistently execute exciting and thrilling performances to attract an international audience used to seeing sophisticated and entertaining theater productions. Acrobatic and gymnastic movements are more frequently incorporated to heighten excitement. One good example is "Sayaw sa Bangko," a dance performed by a couple on a bench.

Bayanihan's contemporary "Sayaw sa Bangko"

The original version was danced on only one wooden bench, about two feet high and eight inches wide. The benches are typical furniture pieces associated with the lower classes, simply constructed, not ornately designed, and used in daily life both indoors and outdoors. A couple stands atop the bench and would change places either by passing one another through the narrow width of the bench, or with the man supporting the woman as she jumps across. The man also twirls the woman around, and the dance is quite exciting because of the festive music, the lively movements, and the display of balance and skillful partnering of the couple. Bayanihan heightened the excitement of this dance with their recent re-choreography, which involves dancing on top of a pyramid of seven benches arranged to achieve a height of four levels, with dancers jumping artfully up and down several levels or jumping on, and over, benches in an exciting acrobatic display that requires balance, grace, athleticism, and precision.

In the mid-1990s, the company began to show its "changed and changing identity," to borrow the terms of Trimillos,¹⁵ which indicates a departure from the previous Bayanihan. As Helena Benitez, the founder of Bayanihan, stated:

Bayanihan has both to remain constant and to change and adapt. It has to remain constant and true to its mission of showcasing the best of Philippine culture and artistry. But it has to do this by making the changes needed to meet the preferences, expectations and

requirements of an audience of a different century, an audience nurtured in high technology and the information age.¹⁶

The company began to experiment with new approach to its choreography, production design, costuming, and overall concept, presenting Hollywood-like stage effects and introducing new technology (such as projected images, lasers, and computers) to their productions to keep up with the world trend of theater arts and to reach out to the younger generation. In doing so, what used to be a classic dance repertoire of Philippine folk dance was recreated into a new-looking dance, like the Bayanihan's "Maglalatik," one of the iconic dances of Philippine folk dance.

"Maglalatik" dance: The Bayanihan's treatment

"Maglalatik," a popular number of the rural dance suite, is a unique dance that involves male dancers with coconuts shells attached to various parts of their bodies that are tapped by shells in their hands to the beat of music while vigorously dancing. The dance is fun and exciting because of the quick movements of the hands from the clicking on shells strapped to the knee, then to the hips, the chest, and the shoulder blades, in rapid succession. The accompanying clicking sound adds a festive flavor to the experience. This is a popular version of "Maglalatik" performed by the ROFG and other folk dance troupes. But Bayanihan decided to heighten the excitement even further. Unlike the typical entrance for "Maglalatik," which involves male dancers cheerfully entering the stage as a group, the Bayanihan version starts dramatically: a solo male dancer stands on the dark stage with a spotlight on him. Sometimes, smoke is used as an additional effect. He starts clicking coconut shells in slow motion and in silence without any music accompaniment. Then he gradually increases his tempo, eventually clicking faster and faster, until the rest of the dancers accompanied by lively music burst into the stage. The transitions from silence to lively music, from darkness to a bright stage, and from a lone dancer moving slowly to a larger group moving vigorously, achieve a dramatic and captivating theater experience.

In Bayanihan's performance, individual dances are generally shown one after another as a dance piece, detached from the larger cultural context and functions of dance. The ROFG also uses this standard delivery format, but Obusan has tried to recontextualize a dance event by bringing in the larger cultural context where a dance is originally embedded. Dance is often presented within a larger ethnographic narrative—such as wedding, death, childbirth, circumcision, healing ritual, or feast—and a community or village scene is usually reproduced on the stage. Thus the group's dance is technically not a dance piece but rather a dance drama.

Since lots of ethnographic information/knowledge is embedded in their performance, the group recently calls this kind of performance as "Informance"—a combination of two terms: "information" and "performance." Take, for example, the Yakan wedding called "*pagkawin*" of Basilan, Sulu. In chronological sequence, Obusan was able to show the whole process of the wedding in 15-20 minutes while highlighting different phases of the wedding ceremony—such as the preparation of the bride and groom, a parade to the bride's house, the villagers' preparation of the wedding venue, the wedding rite and a feast—without putting in any complicated choreography and theatrical movements. ROFG's recontextualization of the Yakan wedding proceeds in the following manner:

The "Pansak" dance of the Yakan people

On the stage, a fully dressed Yakan groom is being attended to by a female assistant who applies traditional makeup on his face. She puts white dots and lines in various patterns all over his face. The groom wears his kris or sword on his waist to complete his preparation for his wedding. Preceded by the colorful *panji* and *tipas-tipas* banners, a parade of male warriors and Yakan ladies who are carrying food covered with a decorative *tutop*¹⁷ starts out, followed by the groom, who is standing on the shoulders of male attendant and followed by a black umbrella holder. After the parade, the *tumahik*, or warrior dance, is performed by males using a

spear and a rounded wooden shield. Then the bride in a decorated *usugan*, or small, houselike carrier, parades in with her female attendants. She is carried out of the *usugan* by a male attendant and brought to the ceremonial place. Then the wedding ritual starts. The groom takes plain rice with his fingers, and tries to feed the bride, but she turns it down. He tries again, but she turns it down again. The third time, she accepts his offer and shyly eats the rice from his fingers. Now, he puts a white towel on her shoulder, but she throws it on the floor. He tries again, but she throws it likewise. The third time, she accepts it, and starts dancing “Pindulas,” a sort of “Pangalay,” which is characterized by the broken-arm movement and angular movement of palms. Everybody on stage celebrates the couple with *pansak*, which literally means “to dance.” While dancing, the couple together plays a musical instrument called *tuntungan*, a unique percussion plank with a jar-shaped resonator.

A performance by the ROFG is thus culturally specific, hence a narration or voice-over is often provided before or during the performance. Although the group also uses modern technologies, the purpose of their use is mainly educative and to provide additional information and guide so that the audience can properly interpret and understand their performance and gain deeper understanding of little-known Filipino traditions. Recently, the ROFG has adopted audiovisual presentations, showing video footages of Obusan’s fieldwork, which provides a visual image of the original that the group researched.

These performances are, however, usually staged only for its seasonal performances at the CCP, and thus mainly designed and meant for the national/local audience, especially those who are based in Manila—that is, Christian-Filipinos. For their seasonal performance, the group has produced various programs that deal with specific themes such as ritual roots (“Ritual Roots: Unpublished Dances of the Philippines Series 5,” 2006), life cycle (“Pag-inog, Pag-indak, Pagdiwang,” 2009), and rituals of leadership and prestige (“Pamunuan: Karangyaan at Kadakilaan,” 2010). Through these theme-specific dance productions that do not employ the typical five-suite representational format, the group tries to look back

into the traditional customs, values, and aesthetics of “other” fellow Filipinos as well as their own to search for what can be called “essence”—deep-rooted and shared by all Filipinos regardless of differences in religion, culture, and language.

Different perspectives of national identity, multifaceted effects of hybridity

As we have seen, Bayanihan has progressively theatricalized Philippine folk dance by incorporating “new” and “modern” things to keep up with the world trend of theater arts and to reach out to a wider audience. In the process, internal cultural differences among ethnic/cultural communities are blurred to create one essential national character. In particular, the use of basic postures and positions of ballet as the basis for performing all local dances has produced a sense of unity among all different dances, further contributing to the creation of a common sense of Filipino-ness. On the contrary, the ROFG has rather traditionalized Philippine folk dance by going back to distinctive local tradition and aesthetics, and incorporating more “traditional” elements. The group’s strategy of emphasizing cultural difference and specificity has shaped and defined cultural identity of each ethnic/cultural community, which reorients to multicultural society of the Philippines. Through closely looking into old traditions of various ethnic/cultural communities, the group seeks to reconstruct the essence of “Filipino-ness” that withstands historical/cultural changes. This idea is based on the assumption that an “original” or “pure” Filipino culture previously existed, and this must have been better preserved in indigenous culture, which is less influenced by western culture.

The concern of the ROFG for purity or authenticity may be understandable, given the historical process in which Philippine folk dance was produced and developed. In a country like Indonesia, for example, the so-called traditional or classical forms of dance were well developed and well established before local artists embarked on experimenting with new or modern elements or technologies. The artists may be well aware of what

is traditional or classical and what is not. Local dances in the Philippines, however, when popularized in the late 1950s, were already modernized and innovated when presented in a program prior to the establishment or codification of solid cultural base or traditional forms of dance. In other words, the Philippine folk dance started with highly theatricalized form of dance. In this context, the ROFG has tried to restore and codify traditional forms of dances looking into the dances found in the field, although technically these “original” dances might not be traditional and authentic anymore. However, the presence of the two dance companies provides the idea of theatrical and traditional performances and thus effectively reconstructs a classification of “modern” and “traditional.”

The Bayanihan’s version of hybridity, which is aesthetically pleasing but unable to sustain cultural authenticity, however, has sometimes generated criticism, especially from local communities as well as a small circle of dance scholars and newspaper critics who regard it as too theatricalized and commercialized. But, with its innovative and creative performances, the company has constantly gone out on international tour and won several international awards to prove the “world-class” artistry of the Filipino to the outside world. The company’s success in an international sphere subsequently brings national pride back to Filipinos, from which a sense of Filipino identity is drawn.

After Bayanihan was officially designated as the “national” folk dance company in 1998 through Republic Act 8626, it seems that the roles of Bayanihan and ROFG have diverged. Their different performance styles with varying traditions of hybridization now serve different sets of audiences and exist for different needs and purposes of the state and the nation. Bayanihan more frequently appears in international events hosted by the state, and more often goes out of the country as a cultural representative of the Philippines, whereas the ROFG focuses on performances within the country and specializes in “specific” folk dance productions to produce and provide cultural knowledge on Filipino traditional culture for educational purposes. In other words, Bayanihan has come to represent Filipino hybrid identity to the world through the creativity and artistry of

contemporary Filipinos having the ability to combine western/foreign arts and local dance forms to create a unique Filipino art work. The ROFG shows the hybrid identity through heterogeneous cultural composition of the nation with emphasis on the artistry of Filipino traditional artists who have developed their own unique cultures through years by incorporating various external cultural influences, from which a sense of Filipino identity grows. The two aspects of Filipino hybrid identity produced by the two dance companies are thus used by the state for different purposes and shown differently for different audiences: Bayanihan for the international audience, and the ROFG for the national or local audience.

Conclusion

In the Philippines, the concept of hybridity is an important constituent of national identity and aesthetic style, and also a useful strategy to symbolically contain all different cultural communities. Some scholars (Alonso 2004; Kuortti & Nyman 2007) discussed and warned that hybridity, when linked to nationalism or state power, might be seen as a hegemonic, neocolonial project that tries to expand the cultural values of the dominant group—in this case, the dominant hegemonic values of Christian Filipinos. However, as we have seen, the idea of hybrid identity represented and communicated by the two folk dance companies is not authoritative and monolithic. They have developed two contrasting traditions of hybridization that show different perspectives toward the idea of nation and a sense of national identity. Bayanihan, a pioneer folk dance company of the Philippines, has mainly drawn its idea from western or universal theater/stage arts and progressively theatricalized by incorporating “new” and “modern” elements into local dance forms. On the contrary, the ROFG has mainly drawn its idea from local dance forms and theater by going back to the original source, and has incorporated more “traditional” elements in its theater performance. Today’s academic discourse on hybridity emphasizes that all cultures are hybrid, thus there is no “pure” and “essential” culture. But to a country like the Philippines whose “original” culture is hardly traced and defined, the idea of purity, or rather the desire

for purity, may still be important. A dance company like the ROFG still seeks to trace the roots of Filipinos to or draw “Filipino-ness” from old traditions and local aesthetics existing in the country whereas Bayanihan tries to draw a new sense of “Filipino-ness” from its innovative and creative performances, which prove the world-class artistry of the Filipino. These two aspects of hybrid identity are then creatively and effectively used by the state according to different demands and needs at international and national levels, and depending on what image/idea of the Philippines it wishes to propagate.

Notes

- 1 There is no unified or official term for this specific genre of national folk dancing in the Philippines, and it is sometimes interchangeably called just Philippine dance.
- 2 The Spanish-influenced suite is sometimes called “Maria Clara” suite because of the westernized costume named after a heroine of a famous novel, *Noli Me Tangere*, by the Philippine national hero, Jose Rizal. This suite shows Filipino versions of jota, polka, waltz, fandango, habanera, etc., which were introduced to the lowland Philippines during the Spanish period.
- 3 Lumad means “native” or “indigenous” in Visayan, one of native languages in the central part of the Philippines.
- 4 “Tinikling” is a very popular Philippine folk dance. Named after the *tikling* (heron) bird, it is a game dance in which dancers dart in and out of clapped bamboo poles without their feet being caught.
- 5 “Pandanggo sa Ilaw” is also a very popular Philippine folk dance, in which dancers balance oil lamps on their head and palms while dancing.
- 6 The Philippine Women’s University is one of earliest institutions that advocated the revival movements of folk dances and songs initiated by the University of the Philippines in the 1930s.
- 7 The other participating countries were Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma, Malaya, and Thailand.
- 8 The Bayanihan delegation presented 35 folk dances and songs in two weeks.
- 9 The delegation was supposed to use a piano for accompaniment of their presentation. Lucrecia R. Kasilag, the head of the delegation, asked festival organizers, but they did not have a piano for an “Asian” cultural festival; only the guitar was available (de Guzman 1987, p. 81).

- 10 This is Bayanihan's interpretation. Other dance troupes, like Sining Pananadem based in Mindanao State University–Marawi, interprets that “singkil” means, in local language, to entangle the feet with disturbing objects such as vines or anything in your path.
- 11 *Bae* is a local title used for a noble woman in Maranao society. It is often interpreted as “princess,” but strictly speaking, the word has no equivalent term in English.
- 12 Personal interview with Hoffer, July 2003.
- 13 To note, there are several interpretations of the “Singkil.” Obusan interprets “Singkil” as a wedding dance performed with a brief ritual at the beginning. The “Singkil” of the Philippine Barangay Folkdance Troupe, based on Aquino's research, portrays a prince dancing with scarves instead of a sword and shield.
- 14 Other popular touring companies are the Philippine Barangay Folk Dance Troupe, FEU Dance Group, Filipinescas, and Leyte Kalipayan Dance Company (then Leyte Filipiniana Dance Troupe).
- 15 Taken from a review by Trimillos of Bayanihan's performance in Hawaii in 2001, which appeared in “Bayanihan Déjà Vu” written by Belinda Aquino for the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (December 19, 2001).
- 16 Taken from a souvenir program.
- 17 Tutop is a dome-shaped colorful food cover made of bamboo leaves.

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“Play” in *Gopas* Ritual in Kalinga Province, Philippines¹

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Abstract

In the municipality of Pasil, Kalinga, Philippines, the practice of performing *gopas* rite persists to this day. A shaman, called *mangogopas*, conducts the ritual to give a person a guardian spirit. It consists of complicated processes with elements and activities that have symbolic meanings. However, in the last part of the ritual’s climax, there is an unnamed segment where the shaman and her assistant seem to relax, act irreverently, or play like children. While illustrating the *gopas* rite process, this article sheds light on how this ostensibly meaningless “play” portion paradoxically manifests significance as liminal space because it allows participants to obtain new understanding of their social order. This article points out that this part of the ritual highlights and differentiates both the symbolic and the substantial elements in the people’s daily life.

Keywords: ritual, play, traditional medicine

Introduction

SHAMANIC studies since the 1980s has developed a new paradigm by regarding shamanism, including such practice as spirit possession, as a universal religious phenomenon. Such perspective rejects a narrow, classical

understanding of shamanism as nothing more than an ancient art of ecstasy (Yamada 1998, p. 107). The problem of shamanic studies in anthropology lies in the premise that “shamanism pertains to healing” (Okuno 1998, p. 327). It is the scholars and practitioners of modern medicine—which tends to equate the human body with a machine—who raised a question why a shaman, who does not seem to be a “rational medical scientist,” could cure sickness, as a point of departure for their researches. Since the middle of the 20th century, shamanic studies has been influenced by such a question of modern medicine, and research has tended to focus on the shaman’s conduct as an act of medical treatment and in terms of “medical effectiveness” from the point of view of modern medical science (ibid., p. 332). Therefore, deconstructing such framework and renewing sociocultural analysis are necessary in shamanic studies.

Okuno warns us that such terms as “treatment” and “medical effectiveness” have been used indiscriminately in shamanic studies. Keeping Okuno’s caution in mind that we must use these terms more carefully from the perspective of social science, this paper inquires into the meaning of “play” through an analysis of the *gopas* ritual in the municipality of Pasil, province of Kalinga in northern Philippines.

The *gopas* ritual is usually conducted to introduce a guardian spirit to a sick person. It takes two days to perform this ritual. Each segment is meaningful and complicated. This paper focuses on a portion after the ritual’s climax where the shaman and her assistant, both old women, “played” innocently like children. In this play segment of the ritual, they toyed with some pork cuts, joked and laughed like children, amusing the participating audience. Obviously peculiar, this process had a different atmosphere from the rest of the ritual. So what function or meaning does this play have when it does not seem to be as serious and significant as the other parts of the ritual? Why is a play included toward the last part of the ritual?

This paper discusses the function of such act of play, which is ostensibly considered bereft of meaning in the midst of a meaningful process of the ritual. This can be a step toward understanding the Pasil

residents’ notion of sickness and the function of the *gopas* ritual not necessarily in terms of its scientific medical effectiveness but in terms of its sociocultural meaning.

Belief system of Pasil residents

General view of Pasil, Kalinga, Philippines

The province of Kalinga is located in the steep mountainous region of Northern Luzon. Its adjoining provinces are Cagayan, Abra, Mountain Province, and Apayao. The province consists of seven municipalities² and a capital city, Tabuk. The municipality of Pasil, the fieldwork site of this study, is one of its municipalities. Pasil has 14 barangays,³ with a population of about 10,080 in 2007.⁴ The dry season is from March to May, and the rainy season is from June to February.

According to local oral accounts, the residents of Pasil believed in a supreme god, Kabunyan. However, since Christianity was introduced in Bulanao, Tabuk area, in 1783 (Sugguiyao 1990, p. 13), most of the population have been Christianized, either as Roman Catholics or Protestants. Slash-and-burn farming, paddy rice and dry-land rice cultivation, and hunting and gathering remain their major sources of livelihood. However, as the need for currency increased, they began to seek cash incomes, too. Today, some run mall *sari-sari* stores and others work for municipal offices or schools. The new trend is to work in cities (e.g., Tabuk, Baguio, or Manila) or abroad (e.g., Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, or the Middle East). In addition, not a small number of the population of Pasil work in mines, as Pasil possesses rich mineral resources such as gold, silver, and copper. At one time, it had the largest mine in the province.

Belief system of Pasil folks

Under Spanish rule, which lasted more than 300 years, Roman Catholicism spread across the Philippine archipelago. When American

rule started in 1902, Protestant missionaries began evangelizing different parts of the country, including Northern Luzon. Today, most Kalingas are Christians. Small churches are present even in remote areas of the province. Nevertheless, it is observed that traditional animistic beliefs in supernatural beings are ingrained in the religious views of Pasil folks. Such beliefs correspond with various aspects of their daily lives. Misfortunes or catastrophes, such as sickness or accident, are explained as having been caused by supernatural beings, thus they pay careful attention to get along with these beings in their daily lives.

The supernatural beings that Pasil folks talked about can be grouped roughly into two: the supreme god Kabunyan, or Apo Dios (God the Father), called with the Christianized terminology; and the various kinds of spirits known as *alan*. God exists somewhere far from the people while *alan* spirits roam around the community and sometimes make direct contact with the villagers.

During my stay in Pasil, the local people seldom mentioned the name Kabunyan; instead, they usually referred to Apo Dios, the term for the Christian God. In Pasil, it is believed that those who engage in criminal or immoral behavior, such as robbery, are deviating from the social norm and shall be punished by Apo Dios in some way—for instance, by getting sick.

On the other hand, the term “*alan*” is used to refer to all kinds of spirits in general. *Alan* includes the spirits of the dead (*kakkalading*), the souls of people who are about to die or have just died (*kadudua*), bad spirits, and guardian spirits. A *kadudua* can be called *kakkalading* about a year after one’s death, although I did not find any person who could clearly explain the difference between these two terms.

It is believed by some Pasil villagers that the soul of the dead does not go to heaven immediately after death but roam around the area where the person lived. In the event the dead has something to tell the living, its spirit attempts to contact the living by “talking” to them. It is believed that such action of the spirit of the dead can bring about illness to those who are contacted. One of my informants once conversed with the spirit of

her son who had died of an accident. When one of her daughters got sick, the spirit of her son appeared and said, “Put *bayas* [sugarcane wine] at the entrance of the house.” So she did, and after a while her daughter got well.

A dead spirit resembles a human being, some of my informants explained. Those who have seen spirits say that they wear white or black clothes, while a *kadudua* wears a skirt or loincloth of Kalinga pattern. Such traditional clothes—namely, a skirt or loincloth of Kalinga pattern—are obviously relevant to Kalinga custom.

Alan also includes bad spirits. It is said that they are the spirits of people who committed crimes or practiced sorcery during their lifetime. Some of them have specific names, and they usually inhabit in the watersides. The bad alan is said to roam around the villages, too. Some specific spots within and outside the village are identified by the villagers as *ngilin*, the place where bad spirits are believed to inhabit. At those spots, there are quite a few rumors or tales about alan: “An alan hurled stones at us while we were passing there” or “Somebody saw many babies floating in that spring.” An interviewee described the bad spirits as being very tall, having downy feather-like hair, possessing blue and shiny eyes, long nosed, bearded, sporting long and curly hair, and dark brown skinned. They sometimes appear in the form of an animal, such as pig or horse, and can mislead people into the forests or to a faraway land, or cause sickness.

A family with a newborn baby takes great precautions against bad spirits because it is believed that babies are easily affected by them; a spirit’s mischief can cause the soul of a baby to leave its body. That is why we can see *paksiw*, crossed sticks made of *paul*, a type of plant, at the entrance of each house where there is a newborn. Visitors from far away are expected to refrain from entering a house with *paksiw* by its entrance because it is possible that they have passed a *ngilin* and the bad spirits there have followed them. If a visitor visits a newborn and the baby cries unusually or gets sick, people call the baby’s condition *nangilin*, explaining that it was caused by the bad spirits that had followed the visitor from

elsewhere. In this way, Pasil residents protect themselves against bad spirits and avoid getting sick in their daily lives.

Besides bad spirits and spirits of the dead, alao also includes guardian deities such as *sangasang* or *pudayan*, which is associated with a sacred spot at the entrance of a hamlet, or *odong*, a guardian deity that some families or houses inherit.

The *sangasang* or *pudayan* guardian deity protects the hamlet. *Sangasang* is regarded as a type of weapon in the event of tribal wars. It is believed that *sangasang* saves a hamlet from enemy attacks by causing the enemy—that is, the evil outsider—sickness with severe abdominal pain, headache, excessive perspiration, systemic numb sensation, or a loss of rationality (Sugguiyao 1990, p. 94). Even the villagers can be harmed by *sangasang* and can get sick in case they urinate or spit on *sangasang*, intentional or not. Sometimes the *sangasang* appears in the form of an animal, such as monkey, and misleads people on their way. Bones of carabao, chicken, pig, or dog are placed as markers of *sangasang* spots. However, in recent years, the villagers seldom observe this practice anymore; as a result, it is hard for both villagers and outsiders to identify the location of *sangasang*.

Some families and houses inherit the guardian deity *odong*. The *odong* is called *gopas* when children inherit it from their parents, and it is called *kusisi* or *allot* when the house itself inherits it.

The literal meaning of *gopas* in Pinasil, the Pasil language, is “to cut a cloth with a knife.” The belief in and practice of *gopas* inheritance is said to have originated from Biga, Tabuk, according to a shaman who can conduct the ritual to settle the sickness caused by *gopas*. It has spread to other areas through increasing intertribal marriages. Currently, Barangay Cagaluan of Pasil is famous for *gopas* inheritance, and the shaman who can conduct a *gopas* ritual is a native of the place.

Kusisi or *allot* refers to the guardian spirit inherited by the house itself. However, the number of houses holding *kusisi/allot* has been gradually decreasing.

At the kitchen of the houses that have inherited kusisi/allot or those of the families who have inherited gopas, there are tiny dwellings set aside for the guardian spirits—generally in a corner of the ceiling. The tiny house for the kusisi guardian spirit is made of coconut shells, and the house for the gopas guardian spirit, called *bagikatan*, is made of crossed sticks of a plant called paul, on which chicken foot, piece of white cloth, *tongaton* (bamboo stamping tube), and betel nuts are suspended.

Taboos exist in inheriting odong. Odong holders, residents, and visitors must observe such taboos. At houses holding kusisi, sitting on certain spots, such as the entrance or the threshold, is prohibited. It is believed that sitting on those spots can cause a person sickness with unusual itchiness or abdominal swelling. Also, odong holders must share some meat—that of carabao, cow, pig, or chicken—with the guardian spirits before every meal that includes meat. It is believed that if an odong holder forgets to offer meat prior to the meal, the guardian spirits would get angry and cause him illness. Only the family members can heal such sickness caused by kusisi by conducting *sap-oy* (literally “to blow”) by shouting “foooi” and by beating the affected parts with a broom or plastering saliva.

For gopas holders, some types of food are considered taboo—namely, dog, eel, frog, bat, or lizard. It is said that the gopas holders’ guardian spirits would cause them to get ill if they broke the taboo. Sometimes the spirits may cause sickness for other reasons like demanding something from the gopas holders. The gopas shaman, called *manggogopas*, can cure such sickness by conducting a gopas ritual.

As mentioned earlier, it is often observed that the cause of sickness or death is often attributed to supernatural beings even today when modern medicine is practiced in Pasil. In the next section, I will present in detail a gopas ritual, which is usually conducted to heal sickness of a gopas holder caused by guardian spirits.

Gopas ritual

General information on the ritual

In this section I illustrate the sequence of a gopas ritual as performed before me for two days in January 2010. Most of the details of the ritual presented here are based on my participatory observation, my own memory, notes taken by my two research assistants (Ellen and June), and photographs and video. The information was cross-checked when I attended another gopas ritual for a sick person in Barangay Balinciagao Norte on November 26, 2010. The sequence of this ritual was fairly identical to that I observed earlier.

The gopas ritual, as a rule, is conducted to appease the anger of the guardian spirit that is believed to have caused the illness of a gopas holder or his/her child. If the child had not become a gopas holder prior to the ritual, he or she will be given a guardian spirit and becomes a gopas holder after the ritual.

When a Japanese male visitor in Pasil pleaded a gopas shaman to give him a gopas inheritance, the shaman suggested that I take the ritual with him because the subject of the ritual should usually be a male and female pair.⁵ I therefore had a chance to be the subject of a gopas ritual during my stay in Pasil.

The gopas ritual was conducted on 28 January 2010 from about 6:00 pm to midnight and on 29 January 2010 from 5:00 am to 3:00 pm. It was performed in the house of one of my research assistants, June, in Barangay Balinciagao Norte, Pasil. Through arrangements made by my assistants, I invited Ina⁶ Bang-on, a woman about 90 years of age from the nearby barangay of Cagaluan, to lead the ritual. Ina Anggo and Ina Immina, both women about 70 years of age from the adjacent barangay of Balinciagao Sur, as requested by Ina Bang-on, served as her assistants. In Pasil today, there is only one shaman who can perform gopas (manggogopas), and there are four elderly women who can assist her as far as I know. The purpose of the gopas ritual done for “A” and me was to provide us with gopas guardian spirits and to pray for our health and

Table 1. Items prepared for the ritual

English	Pinasil	Number of pieces
native pig	<i>bolok</i>	1
native chicken	<i>manok</i>	2
rice	<i>binayu</i>	
glutinous rice	<i>daikot</i>	
rice plant	<i>oyak</i>	
rattan string	<i>iwoy</i>	4
blanket	<i>ulos</i>	2
Kalinga-designed skirt	<i>kain</i>	2
Kalinga-designed belt	<i>takyed</i>	2
floor mat	<i>obok</i>	1
porcelain bowl	<i>malukong</i>	2
coconut oil	<i>lana</i>	
a piece of white cloth		1
small knife	<i>gipen</i>	1
small balls	<i>aplog and alubo</i>	1 each
small mortar	<i>lusong</i>	1
gold earring		1
plastic bowl		10
<i>baliliko</i> shells	<i>baliliko</i>	1 set
small metallic tube	<i>likop</i>	1
<i>lawod</i> leaves	<i>lawod</i>	
coconut leaves	<i>bain</i>	
betel nuts	<i>buwa</i>	
house of spirits	<i>bagikatan</i>	1
basket	<i>damos</i>	1
flat gongs	<i>gangsa</i>	1 set
bamboo musical instruments	<i>tongatong</i>	1 set
salt	<i>asin</i>	
sugar	<i>inti</i>	
coffee	<i>kapi</i>	
vinegar	<i>suka</i>	
alcohol ⁷		
kerosene		

prosperity. Since I had not held gopas before then, the gopas for the children of the gopas holders was simulated prior to the performance of the ritual. Several items needed for the ritual were prepared (see Table 1).

Ritual processes⁸

The gopas ritual largely consists of four parts: *wodwod*, *apalin*, *battolay*, and *kallising*. Between *battolay* and *kallising*, there is a segment where the shaman and her assistants seemed to relax and play like children. The people around also relaxed and laughed while watching them. This segment does not seem to have a particular name. It is in this segment of the ritual that I find elements of play.

Wodwod

The gopas ritual started about 6 pm through midnight on January 28, 2010. Only the first part of the ritual, *wodwod*,⁹ was performed on the first day. The *wodwod* consists of nine segments. Below is the sequence of these segments.

1. Buyon (searching)

Buyon was performed to decide which guardian spirit would be in charge of “A” and me. Ina Bang-on asked the spirits about this by putting a small ball (*aplog*) on a metallic tube (*likop*) on top of the uncooked rice (*binayu*) in a bowl (*malukong*).

2. Sap-oy (blowing)

Ina Bang-on rubbed coconut oil on my forehead and on that of “A,” calling the names of the selected guardian spirits respectively for us.

3. Songa (applying animal blood on the affected body part)

Songa was performed after Ina Bang-on had cut the throat of a native chicken with a knife and kept its blood in a bowl. She held the dead

Table 2. Processes of the *gopas* ritual

First day			
I. Wodwod			
6 pm	1	<i>buyon</i>	Select the guardian spirits for me and “A.”
	2	<i>sap-oy</i>	Call on the two selected guardian spirits respectively.
	3	<i>songa</i>	Apply chicken blood on me and “A.”
	4	<i>mangan si daikot</i>	Have some cooked glutinous rice.
	5	<i>doydoy</i>	Prepare rattan strings and some items.
	6	<i>singising</i>	Recite and chant.
	7	<i>mangan si manok</i>	Have cooked chicken and some rice.
	8	<i>alisig</i>	Do <i>sap-oy</i> for health and play instruments.
Midnight	9	<i>inodon</i>	Dance and kick the pig.
Second day			
II. Apalin			
Dawn			
7 am	1	apalin	Do <i>sap-oy</i> and carry the pig outside.
	2	*cooking the pig *telling the omen *hanging <i>tugon</i>	
	3	<i>mamalliyat</i>	Prepare for items
III. Battolay			
Noon	1	<i>singising</i>	Recite and chant.
	2	<i>makalat</i>	Follow the gold earring.
	3	<i>mangan si bolok.</i>	Have cooked pig and some rice.
	4	playing with <i>bosal</i> *removing the rattan strings and all items	Play with <i>bosal</i> .
IV. Kallising			
3 pm		<i>kallising</i>	Turn and draw the bowls to my body.
		*cleaning	

* Unnamed segments of the ritual.

chicken and pressed it on my knee and recited, “Inugan [the name of my guardian spirit], go to Japan with Tomoko [my name]!”

4. Mangan si daikot (eating glutinous rice)

After songa, we ate glutinous rice without any sugar. It is considered taboo to add sugar to the glutinous rice to be eaten during this ritual.

5. Doydoy (preparations)

Rattan strings were tied near the ceiling, and some rice plants and a living native chicken were hung over the rattan strings.

6. Singising (hitting bowl with a knife and to chant)

Ina Bang-on chanted, hitting the bowl with a small knife, while her assistant shook baliliko shells. In this part, Ina Bang-on called on the guardian spirits and pleaded with them for our health. She also entreated them to stay in their own house (bagikatan).

7. Mangan si manok (eating chicken)

After singising, we ate cooked chicken and some rice.

8. Alisig¹⁰

After eating chicken, “A” and I sat on the floor mat, and male participants started playing gongs and bamboo musical instruments while Ina Bang-on put lawod leaves, coconut leaves, and takyed belt on our backs.

9. Inodon (old ritual)

“A” and I remained seated on the mat. Male participants kept playing the musical instruments. Ina did singising, and Ina Anggo shook baliliko shells and lusong behind us. A takyed was placed between a living native pig lying down in a corner of the room and the floor mat where “A” and I

were sitting. Then Ina Bang-on ordered us to stand up with her. She tightened the takyed around our waists, and the two of us danced, making a circle. After a while, I kicked the pig while we were dancing; this action indicates the transfer of our sickness to the pig, according to Ina Bang-on. When the dance was finished, Ina Bang-on placed the Kalinga-designed skirt (*kain*) over the pig. This concluded the *wodwod*, the first part of the ritual; it was already midnight by then. As we left June’s house, Ina Bang-on reminded us to return before sunrise.

On the second day, the *gopas* ritual continued. Three “named” parts of the *gopas* ritual were performed on this day: *apalin*, *battolay*, and *kallising*. The play segment, the focus of this paper, took place in the afternoon of this day, between *battolay* and *kallising* toward the end of the ritual.

Complying with what Ina Bang-on told us, “A” and I returned before sunrise. Ina Bang-on, her assistants, and my research assistant Ellen slept at June’s house. The other villagers returned to the venue after sunrise.

Apalin

1. Apalin (to touch the pain or the affected body part)

At first Ina Bang-on prepared some water in a bowl and sprinkled some over the native pig lying in the corner; the pig’s ear flapped, which, Ina said, indicated that “A” and I would be healthy. She also stroked our feet with her wet hand and recited, “Go out! Wish they would be healthy even after they have returned to Japan.” Then she moved to a fireplace and threw the rest of the water into it, saying, “Wish they would never get sick. Wish they would have more crops and domestic animals.” At the end of this part, the male neighbors carried the pig outside the house.

2. Cooking the pig; telling the omen; hanging *tugon*

At the break of dawn the male neighbors started to carve and cook the pig; the female neighbors cooked special glutinous rice for *gopas* called

tinibalo. The male neighbors cut the pig's throat with a knife and collected its blood in a bowl. They broiled the pig over the fire, scraped the burnt hair off, and started to carve it very carefully, complying with Ina Anggo's strict instructions. The men looked very serious, for they were expected to carve and chop the pig accurately. Ina Anggo scolded them from time to time when they made mistakes. The internal organs of the pig, except for the liver, were cooked for "a snack with alcohol" for the men, and the meat was chopped into pieces to be cooked and served to the participants later. Some parts were left uncooked to be given to Ina Bang-on.¹¹ Some other parts were set aside to be used in the ritual later, and some pieces of the uncooked meat (*pain* or abdominal oblique muscle, and *butik* or intercostal muscles) were to be hung at the entrance as a sign (*tugon*) of a *gopas* ritual for guardian spirits.

The liver and *apdu* (one of the internal organs) were put in a washtub so that Ina Bang-on could discern an omen from them. We had a good omen. She said that "A" and I were healthy, and she would have another *gopas* ritual for a child in the near future. After that, the liver was cooked to be used during the ritual later.

3. Mamalliyat (starting)

During the cooking of the pig and *tinibalo*, some items—such as *kain*, blanket, *lawod* leaves, and coconut leaves—were hung over the rattan strings near the ceiling in the room.

Battolay¹²

This is the climax of the *gopas* ritual. The following four segments comprise this part of the ritual.

1. Singising

At the beginning, "A" and I were seated on the floor mat. Ina Bang-on did singising behind us while Ina Anggo shook *baliliko* shells.

2. Makalat¹³

As male neighbors played the gongs, “A” and I danced, stepping forward and backward in a circular formation. After a while, one of the male neighbors, holding a gold earring as though showing off, joined our dance. Ina Bang-on aggressively followed him to get the gold earring; however, she fainted before doing so. She told me later that she was not conscious while following him and that her body was not hers.

3. Mangan si bolok (eating the pig meat)

Around noon, all the participants ate cooked meat of the pig and some rice outside the house.

4. Playing with bosal (pig’s nose, right ear, right foot, and tail, which are considered unimportant pork parts)

After eating, Ina Bang-on and Ina Anggo seemed to start “playing.” This segment consists of four subsegments: *upoop*,¹⁴ *tungali* (nose flute), *mantilyo* (hammer), and “scrambling the pig’s liver” (no local term is designated for this subsegment). During *upoop*, Ina Bang-on and Ina Anggo inserted coconut sticks into the nose and ears of the pig. This is done to prevent us from getting sick with a cold, mouth itchiness, tongue disease, or poor hearing. During *tungali*, Ina Bang-on and Ina Anggo imitated the action of playing the nose flute (*tungali*) with the pig’s tail. This was to prevent us from catching a cold. During *mantilyo*, they tap the chunk of liver with a pig’s leg, which was done to prevent us from getting sick with a headache and general body aches. Lastly, they scrambled the pig’s liver and cooked glutinous rice. Ina Bang-on and Ina Anggo performed these four segments of the ritual; interestingly enough, they seemed to be playing like children. In the next section, I discuss this aspect of the ritual. It is noted that after this play segment, all the rattan strings tied near the ceiling and the items suspended over them were removed.

Kallising¹⁵

This is the last part of the gopas ritual. Ten plastic bowls were placed in front of “A” and me as we sat on the floor mat. Ina Bang-on told me to hold the bowls with the fingers of both hands and then turn the bowls clockwise and counterclockwise five times each. As soon as I finished turning them, I had to catch the ten bowls in my arms and bring them to my body as Ina Bang-on tried to take the bowls.

The lesson from this part of the ritual is to remind us not to worry about our daily needs, such as money or food. One of my informants who inherited gopas explained that kallising is performed to get our kadudua (soul) back to our body. Finally, Ina Bang-on tied a bead necklace around each of our necks.

Thus concluded the gopas ritual. Ina’s assistant tied together the bamboo musical instruments (tongatong) played during the ritual and the bagikatan (a house for my guardian spirit) with the rattan strings removed from the ceiling. The bagikatan must be hung on the ceiling in my house, and I need to offer my guardian spirit a piece of meat every time I eat meat myself. Moreover, I am no longer allowed to eat some kind of food such as eel, bat, dog, frog, lizard, *pais* (distributed meat on funeral to take home), and *kulidaw* (a kind of red fish found in the river). Breaking these taboos would arouse my guardian spirit’s anger and could cause me to get ill.

The function of play in the gopas ritual

This section reflects on the play segment performed toward the end of the gopas ritual. The segment contains elements of imitation and is performed comically. Having no ritualistic categorical label, this segment may ostensibly be considered less “formal,” thus less “important.” However, I suggest that this segment of play paradoxically contains certain importance to the gopas ritual and to the daily community life of Pasil, as it serves as transitional time/space between the ritualistic and non-ritualistic domains.

Play and liminality

A play is neither a work nor a serious and realistic action. Keiji Iwata states the following on the occurrence of a play:

First, the “play” exists outside the tempo-spatial domain of daily life. It occurs at the border between two worlds, such as the sacred and the profane, or at the “shore.” The formation of “play” is not yet clear whether the daily is tempted to become the non-daily or whether the non-daily is moved to become the daily; nevertheless, the boundary between two worlds seems to be the place where play occurs. (1986, p. 132; English translation by this author)

Iwata’s notion of boundary as locus of play is relevant to the notion of liminality by Victor W. Turner. Although Turner did not use the term “play,” he illuminated on the shift between the extraordinary tempo-space and the ordinary one around rituals. Turner regards liminality as the time and space deviated from the normal modes of social actions under an ordinary established structure (Turner 1969, p. 167). He developed the notion of “*communitas*” to explain an unusual social condition that occurs at a particular moment and deviates from the norms of the existing social structure. *Communitas* “emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders” (ibid., p. 96). Turner distinguishes two main types of ritual in liminality: “rituals of status elevation” and “rituals of status reversal.” In rituals of status elevation, the ritual subject or novice is being conveyed irreversibly from a lower to a higher position in an institutionalized system. However, in rituals of status reversal, groups or categories of persons who habitually occupy low status positions in the social structure are positively enjoined to exercise ritual authority over their superiors, who in turn must accept with goodwill their ritual degradation (ibid., p. 167). By making the low high and the high low, they reaffirm the hierarchical principle, and this

kind of ritual brings social structure and *communitas* into the correct mutual relationship once again (*ibid.*, p. 167, 178). As Turner notes, rituals of status reversal are often practiced with robust behaviors, and structural regularity is underlined by such paradoxes.

Since *communitas* can potentially alter the existing social order, Schultz and Lavenda (1993) suggest that “*communitas* should be created in a short period and can be recognized in a play” (Schultz & Lavenda 1993, p. 162). They also suggest that in moving from daily life to time and space of a play, it is necessary for us to shift our mode of communication to “meta-communication,” a more abstract mode of communication (*ibid.*, p. 137). According to Schultz and Lavenda, there are two types of meta-communication in a play. One is flaming—that is, “setting the cognizable border around a behavior and manifesting it as a play.” The other is, quoting Handelman, criticizing for substances of daily life (*ibid.*). A play temporally enables us to reify a fictitious setting regarded as deviation from the social norm. Thus the play can present us an alternative viewpoint different from the norms in a certain structured social system. Therefore a play can be a threatening action to the established norm since it can reveal an alternative order and norm. Schultz and Lavenda suggest that it is in order to get rid of the risk that we often narrate the play as “not serious action,” “a false,” “an imitation,” “a fiction,” or “a fantasy” (*ibid.*, p. 138).

The function of play

The playful segment toward the end of *battolay* of the *gopas* ritual was conducted to the amusement of the neighbors who participated in it, in contrast to the other parts of the ritual that were conducted with seriousness and solemnity. This segment made not only me but also my research assistant Ellen, who is from Pasil, confused. When I asked her whether she has any ideas about the meaning of the segment, she said to me in Tagalog, “*Hindi ko rin alam, e. Parang naglalaro sila, ’no? Bakit kaya naglalaro?*” (I don’t know, either. They seemed to be playing. I wonder why they are playing.) I propose that this play embodies “a vacancy of meaning,” which can be paradoxically the source of meanings of the rite.

As mentioned earlier, the playing part in the last part of *battolay* in the *gopas* ritual consists of four actions: *upoop*, *tungali*, *mantilyo*, and the scrambling of the pig’s liver and cooked glutinous rice.

Iwata’s proposition that play occurs at the boundary between two domains is applicable to our understanding of the function of play in the *gopas* ritual. It was after this playing ritual that all the items hanging in the room, which symbolically demarcated the ritualistic time/space, were removed, and then the final process, *kallising*, was conducted. During this playful part of the ritual, ritualistic functions, which are embodied in the solemnity of the other parts of the ritual, were seemingly absent. In discussing *communitas*, Turner pointed out that status reversal at the liminality could reaffirm the existing social structure, such as the principles of a hierarchical system. In this respect, it can be suggested that “playing” reifies a *communitas*, whose social structure deviates from the existing one.

I further propose that “playing” implies “a vacancy of meaning” in addition to status reversal and social disorder. As noted earlier, Iwata’s discussion of play is relevant in examining the play in the *gopas* ritual as it considers that play takes place at the boundary between the ritual as an extraordinary domain, and the daily life, before and after the ritual, as an ordinary domain. Play, which does not belong to the extraordinary domain or the ordinary one, and therefore holds an ambiguous status, reifies a time and place where persons involved in it are free from the constraints of the norms of the daily life context as well as those of the non-daily, ritualistic one. In addition, the play can also reify a unique time/space that has “a vacancy of meaning,” which ostensibly has neither symbolic nor substantial meaning. Because of the vacancy of meaning, probably, this play segment has no name unlike the other processes of the ritual. This play, when seen as a vacancy of meaning, can paradoxically highlight both symbolic meanings of various elements in the ritual and substantial ones in daily life, and can be the source of the complicated meanings expressed during the *gopas* ritual.

Conclusion

This paper presented that the gopas ritual as practiced in the Municipality of Pasil, Kalinga Province, Philippines, particularly its playing segment performed by two old women, reaffirmed the social norms of the locality. In addition, this paper indicated that the play, ostensibly expressing nothing, could highlight both symbolic meanings of various elements in the ritual and substantial ones in daily life. It also proposed that the play could be the source of the complicated meanings expressed during the ritual.

The gopas ritual, which is usually practiced to heal the sickness of gopas holders, may be regarded as a “healing ritual” in terms of the conventional medical anthropological framework modeled after modern medicine. During the ritual, however, the healing effect of medical treatment, which analysts or researchers may expect, cannot necessarily be realized. In addition, we can find that Pasil folks view the illness within the framework of their own knowledge system, which is different from that of modern medicine. Therefore, it is not appropriate to regard the gopas ritual as a “healing ritual”, as the local notion of “healing” is *not* something equivalent to that of medical treatment in modern medicine.

As Okuno points out, from now on Shamanic Studies should deconstruct the study framework modeled after modern medicine as has been practiced, and instead should be analyzed from the viewpoint of those in the field. I emphasize in this paper that it is important to develop the study of shamanism and ritual from anthropological perspectives. Particularly, it is significant to understand sickness within the knowledge system of Pasil folks, in correspondence with the details of the ritual.

Notes

- 1 This paper is a largely revised and translated version of my paper “Firipin Karinga-shu no gopas girei ni okeru asobi” [Play in gopas ritual in Kalinga Province, Philippines], *Ajia taiheiyō ronsō* (*Bulletin of Asia-Pacific Studies*), 19 (*Ajia taiheiyō kenkyū-kai*, Osaka).

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- 2 A municipality is an administrative unit under a province in the Philippines. The seven municipalities of Kalinga are Pasil, Balbalan, Lubuagan, Pinukpuk, Tanudan, Tinglayan, and Rizal.
- 3 Barangay is the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines. Pasil is composed of following barangays: Balinciagao Norte, Balinciagao Sur, Magsilay, Ableg, Cagaluan, Guina-ang, Balatoc, Malucsad, Pugong, Galdang, Bagtayan, Colayo, Dalupa, and Dangtalan. The spelling of these place names is as given in “The Municipal Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Zoning Ordinance of the Municipality of Pasil.”
- 4 National Statistic Office, <http://www.census.gov.ph/data/census2007/index.html>.
- 5 Usually, the male and female pair is chosen from among siblings.
- 6 In Kalinga, the appellation “Ina” (mother) is used to address not only one’s mother but also an old woman.
- 7 I served some alcohol to participating male neighbors after our ritual since they pleaded me to do so. They were not allowed to drink during the ritual.
- 8 The meanings of some segments and the symbolic meanings of some items were not clearly explained by the manggogopas and her assistants when asked. They often said, “I don’t know the meaning. As this part should be done in this way, I just do it like this!”

- 9 The literal meaning of wodwod is unknown.
- 10 The literal meaning of alisig is unknown.
- 11 Those parts are *bai* (“iliopsoas”), *kubo* (abdominal part), butik (intercostal muscle), *palatang* (chin), and *lapa* (shoulder). They were strung in rattan and hung at a fireplace until Ina Bang-on took them to her house after the ritual.
- 12 The literal meaning of battolay is unknown.
- 13 The literal meaning of makalat is unknown.
- 14 The literal meaning of upoop is unknown.
- 15 The literal meaning of kallising is unknown.

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Book Review

Angelica’s Daughters: A dugtungan novel. Filipina American collaborative writing, art form, and collective experience. Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, Erma Cuizon, Susan Evangelista, Veronica Montes, and Nadine Sarreal, 2010. Manila: Anvil Publishing. 201pp.

WITH their collaborative romance, *Angelica’s Daughters: A Dugtungan Novel*, the five Filipina writers—Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, Erma Cuizon, Susan Evangelista, Veronica Montes, and Nadine Sarreal—have realized a remarkable project. Remarkable, because the romance combines the epistolary novel with traces of the tradition of the female “talk-story.”¹ The book therefore constitutes the collective artistic form and expression as well as cultural experience of a community of Filipina women of several generations. It is a remarkable work, also, because by choosing the unique style of collaborative writing that originated in the Philippines in the early twentieth century, the writers have revived *dugtungan* writing via the Internet and have brought together Filipina writers from both sides of the globe. As the authors themselves explain in their foreword, dugtungan writing means that “one writer . . . work[s] on one portion of the novel, then pass[es] this on to the next writer, and so on, until the novel [is] completed” (2010, p. vi). What began as a transnational writing workshop and weekly meetings in cyberspace soon turned into serious writing. So far, the publication of the short story “New Tricks” (2007)² and *Angelica’s Daughters* (2010) are certainly impressive results.

In addition to indicating its unique Philippine artistic form and heritage, the title immediately invokes a female genealogy, which has the

novel join the ranks of the body of Asian (American) women's writing that, since the feminist projects of the 1960s, seeks to "preserve memory and establish a matrilineal tradition" (Wong & Santa Ana 1999, p. 195). While *Angelica's Daughters* partly continues the 1960s Asian (American) feminist literature, whose aim has been to remedy and counteract racist and sexist stereotypes by turning to strong, heroic female ancestors, the novel also moves on—albeit at times rather tentatively—to such sensitive issues as failed marriages, sexual affairs with married men, as well the perpetual taboo of women having considerably younger lovers.

The story revolves around Tess, a young Filipina whose family emigrates to the United States when she was nine years old. Although Tess mainly grows up in America, marries there and lives close to her father's family, her childhood memories from Manila and her mother's family are not lost to her. Indeed, these memories resurge strongest in times of crisis. Pressured by the paternal family's and the couple's own (internalized) expectations of becoming parents, Tess and her husband Tonio have grown apart. But while Tonio finds comfort and salvation in a love relationship with what appears to Tess a younger version of herself, Tess appears to be left to face the failure of her marriage without any resources to cope. Too absorbed in being the wife of Tonio, Tess has unlearned her ability to develop or nurture her self-identity. It is at this point that the legendary forebear, Angelica, resurfaces from Tess's childhood recollections, which come alive during her visit to Manila and the ancestral home. Angelica's letters, as well as Tess's grandmother's (Lola Josefina) stories add to a multilayered plot that interweaves past and present, individual and collective experiences which evoke a rich and colourful female heritage that provides Tess with the sought for resources to live through her crisis.

At first, still shrouded in Lola Josefina's romantic tales, in the course of events the mythical female ancestor Angelica emerges as a headstrong woman whose fascination lies as much in her stamina to follow her own desires as in her whims and weaknesses. Rather than a towering mythical persona who is "in control of her life at all times" (p. 13), Angelica increasingly turns out to be a character of flesh and blood whose growth from young girl

into a woman and mother includes both the struggle against her own foibles as well as the adversities of the Tagalog War once she gets involved with the painter and illustrator Teban. Reconnecting to her female Philippines ancestors and their wisdom through Angelica's letters helps Tess recover her inner voice and compass—in short, her soul. Needless to say, this soul is decidedly Filipino, notwithstanding the obvious Spanish and American influences that surround her (and her ancestor Angelica) in Manila.

Tess's full embrace and affirmation of her Filipino origins and identity are mirrored in an intriguing episode between her female forebear Angelica and the American consul and stepfather-to-be. In her letters to Tia Elena, Angelica depicts the consul as the quintessential colonizer who, while utterly unconscious of his blundering and ignorance, is firmly convinced of his own moral righteousness and humane mission: "*Once, as he expounded (he loved to expound!) on the future of Asia, he swung his right arm and knocked over the Meissen vase. It broke into a million pieces! Mama saved the shards, hoping to put them together again, but that project is doomed. The poor vase was pulverized*" (p. 31). Apparently unaware of his own presumption and convinced of the liberating and progressive spirit of his mission to spread democracy throughout Asia, whenever the consul gets into one of his "expounding" moods, he manages to drive even the present colonizers into the corner: "*people back off and let him have his say, even the Spaniards*" (p. 34). To Angelica, the American consul is a "magician" who both "*charm[s] and mesmerize[s]*" (p. 35), but also an "idiot" (p. 34) and "*blunderbuss*" (p. 33). The authors are at their best in their ironic enhancement of the consul's colonial personality through the analogy of Perico, his parrot, a bird "*meaner than sin*" (p. 31). Against the advice of Angelica's mother and convinced of his magnanimity, the consul nurses the half-dead parrot back to life, only to have Perico terrorize the rightful inhabitants of the household, "*Papa's three aging parrots*" (p. 31). What is more, "*[t]he nasty bird is master of the place, defecating wherever he pleases and pecking at the mahogany furniture*" (p. 32).

When Angelica writes about the consul's gaze at her budding sexuality and relates that he looks at her "*in a peculiar way*" (p. 42), the

classical patterns of colonial and patriarchal appropriation seem to be complete. However, neither in the life of Angelica nor in the life of Tess does appropriation by a non-Philippine culture take hold; neither of their stories is an example of assimilation. Quite the contrary, both women actually get closer to their Philippine identity in the course of events, even though their life stories are separated by more than a hundred years. In spite of the overbearing behavior of the consul—and his parrot—Angelica takes on the American challenge: driven by her hatred, a hatred that is shot through with her own (sexual) attraction to and curiosity about this male Other, as she admits, Angelica’s deceitful “romancing” of the American consul ends in expelling the intruding foreigner for good with the unexpected retreat by the consul himself. Here, the novel re-writes and responds to the tradition of the popular historical romance that Amy Kaplan has identified as being complicit in the American national-imperial project in two ways. First, it provides a counter-narrative to the traditional assimilation and incorporation of imperial subjects. Second, it shifts the focus away from the “spectacle of American manhood” (Kaplan 1990, p. 667) and onto Filipina womanhood. But in doing so, the novel deviates from the traditional pattern of flawless, heroic characters, aware of the fact that the production of a mere counter-narrative necessarily remains entangled within the troubling discourse of empire and nationhood. Instead of a shining heroine that would qualify for a “spectacle of womanhood” within a national project, Angelica is exposed as “selfish and short-sighted” (p. 59), a flawed fictional character and a woman who openly acknowledges her faults and dark sides. As she writes in her letter to Tia Elena: “*I will try not to exaggerate, nor twist things in my favour*” (p. 41).

Similarly intriguing are the situations two other female characters find themselves in: Lola Josefina’s relationship with her considerably younger dancing instructor, and Tess’s second cousin Dina’s affair with a married man and father. While I applaud the authors to include the unusual love story of Tess’s grandmother with the 43-year-old Dante, I find it unfortunate that her point of view is excluded from the narrative focalization. Except for the fact that Lola Josefina feels like a teenager in

love and that Dante behaves as a handsome lover and graceful dance instructor should—courteous and respectful—in their relationship the two characters remain shadowy and underdeveloped.

In contrast, Dina is allowed her own focalization and her story opens up yet another angle at Filipina womanhood, love, and sexuality. Dina's obsession with Mike is quickly smothered by her own bad conscience and an angry outburst by Tess, which brings Dina's secret affair into the open. The older women scold and wail, and once Dina's father finds out about her affair with a married man, "the house seemed to shake down to its foundation" (p. 138). It seems that much of the parental disapproval of Dina's "foolishness" (p. 139) derives from cultural and social expectations in which female morality plays a central role. Both Dina's bad conscience and her preoccupation with the nuns, as well as the older generation's rage, reflect the ideal of a young Filipina who knows how to restrain her sexual appetites and make the "right" choice—that is, not to have an affair with a married man. Sociologist Yen Le Espiritu (2001) has discerned a similar "'ideal' Filipina" in immigrant communities whose "sexual virtuosity" (p. 427) and family dedication often pose severe restrictions for the younger female generation. However, contrary to the parental strictures, Tess's first harsh reaction to Dina's transgression derives neither from a misdirected sense of morality nor from an insistence on limiting traditional values. Instead, through Dina she relives the anger and disappointment about her own failed marriage. In their later reconciliation Tess apologizes to Dina: "I'm ... sorry Dina. I had no right to tell your family. It was a terrible thing for me to do" (p. 166). All in all, the female descendants of Angelica show an extraordinary openness toward matters of sexuality and passion, no matter what their age.

Throughout the novel, female sensuality is further underscored by the increasing, and increasingly mouthwatering, omnipresence of Philippine food and cooking. While all these issues show the authors at their very best, a number of scenes display a sentimentality and stock inventory of romance that may disappoint the sophisticated readers, in particular when it comes to the male lovers Luis and Teban who remain

truly sentimental men. This may, however, be perfectly satisfactory to those who read *Angelica's Daughters* as what it is intended—namely, as “a relatively light romance” (p. vii). This definitely pertains to the erotic encounters between Tess and Luis, as well as Angelica and Teban. Their lovemaking is filled with romantic clichés and hackneyed phrases. For example, in one of her letters Angelica relates her first moments of bliss with Teban:

We stayed locked together for a long time. I rested my head on his chest and his heart thumped against my cheek. “I have to leave today,” he said.

“I know,” I replied.

He stared deep into my eyes, and he ran his fingers over my forehead, my nose, my cheeks, my chin, and then he held me closer to him. “Are you real?” he murmured. “Perhaps you really are an angel sent from heaven and you will vanish at any moment.” He kissed me, and I kissed him back. And he wrapped me tight against him, and continued, “What will I do without my angel? ...” (p. 89)

Likewise, when at the end of the book Tess finally finds in Luis the wished-for significant Other, a scene unfolds that sounds all too familiar:

Tess turned to find Luis standing just a few feet away. “What are you ...?” she said. And then, “You’re here.” Without any forethought, she found herself moving quickly towards him. He opened his arms to her as if he had been doing it for years.

“Paolo told me I would find you here,” he said. He held Tess to him for a few moments, and when she lifted her head to look at him, he said, “We don’t have much time right now. Just tell me, Tess. Tell me you feel the way I do.”

Suddenly, all the trepidation she had felt about Luis, all the fear of commitment, of being hurt again, were gone; all she knew was how safe

she felt in his arms. In answer, Tess had done what she'd wanted to do from the first moment she saw Luis: she kissed him deeply. (pp. 158-159)

While I consider *Angelica's Daughters* most impressive in its ambiguous and puzzling moments than in its major romantic figure constellations (Tess and Luis; Angelica and Teban), I definitely recommend the book to readers to make up their own minds about such matters of taste. Tess's ultimate—and predictable—fulfilment of true love, however, leads to a question on which the authors remain conspicuously silent throughout the novel: where does Tess stand concerning her other “home,” the United States? Does it still qualify to be called “home”?

Let me return once again to the titular emphasis on the making of the novel and the process of dugtungan writing. Indeed, if one did not know otherwise, one would suspect that the book was the result of a single author, since *Angelica's Daughters* proves a surprisingly even narration. In fact, the success of any dugtungan writing may stand or fall by being too uneven, or not uneven enough. The result may be a texture stitched together so poorly that it falls apart completely or degenerates into “tasteless pap” (considering all the traditional and delicious-sounding food and recipes in the book this comparison comes naturally). If successful, however, it may produce an excitingly diverse texture whose individual patches generate fascinating, fresh meanings and a life of their own. But apparently the published version of *Angelica's Daughters* is the result of the authors' efforts of rewriting their initially submitted manuscript. The final novel is thus heavily revised and reworked in answer to the “scathing” review by a critic from Anvil Publishing who had panned the novel's “lack of unity” (Lim 2010). One cannot help but wonder whether the writers, in their tour-de-force revisions, did not do too much of a good thing erasing all the bumps and crags of their original product, since it is often the rough edges that make the most endearing characteristics of artistic expression. But since any predilections for or against such criteria obviously depend on the eye of the beholder, or rather the respective reviewer, it is moot to speculate whether the original unevenness would have added spice to this romance in a positive sense. Hence, after this first publication, we eagerly

await the next dugtungan novel, which, hopefully, will gratify a less conventional critic and be bolder, and prouder, of its idiosyncrasies and experimental nature.

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Notes

- 1 The element of the “talking story” is surely no coincidence. Not only is it a common “female practice of telling stories, often from one generation to the next” (Grice 2004, p. 182) among Asian American women writers, but it has already defined the form of Cecilia Manguerra Brainard’s novel, *When the Rainbow Goddess Wept* (1991).
- 2 The short story was published in *Sawi: Funny Essays, Stories and Poems on All Kinds of Heartbreaks*, edited by A. J. Loreda, B. J. A. Patino, and R. Bolipata-Santos (New Manila, Quezon City: Milflores Publishing, 2007).

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Growing up Filipino II: More stories for young adults.

Edited by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, 2010. Santa Monica,
CA: PALH. 280 pp.

BENEDICT Anderson once described an uncomfortable paradox for Filipino writers. How was it that the Spanish administration, with its general disregard for educational welfare, produced such literary luminaries as José Rizal and his contemporaries? And why had no writers of equivalent stature emerged from the US system, which had championed universal education?

To venture a possible explanation: the works of the *ilustrados* reflected the heroic values of their time, while writing produced after the introduction of the US school system was to some extent doomed to emulate the tepid style of school readers and comprehension exercises. *Growing Up Filipino II* is an anthology of Filipino young-adult fiction that appears to wrestle with this problem, and the results are unexpected.

Although the volume that preceded this one was reported to have been a success, it is hard to see why. From a marketing point of view, the didactic dullness of a title such as *Growing Up Filipino II* is unlikely to persuade prospective readers to pull the book off the shelf. And the excruciatingly prolix introduction seems purpose-built to discourage any further venturing. Before reaching the stories, the exhausted reader would learn of “the simultaneous differences and interconnections that make Filipino/American writing such a potent source of insight into ethnic configurations of self,” and that the volume’s “plural and palimpsestic approach privileges association as a creative reading strategy that configures a wider scope for the enactment of transcultural subjects.”

Perversely enough, many of the anthologized tales contradict such inanities. You cannot help getting the sense that these 25 Filipino writers—from both the Philippines itself and the diaspora—are pushing against the cookie-cutter scholasticism expected of them by their publisher. Certainly, there are a few who descend into self-conscious moralism, identifying “issues” for their passive audience as if addressing a

rehabilitation workshop for juvenile delinquents. But most stories are so wonderfully original as to resist all attempts at a suffocating poststructural or postcolonialist interpretation. Read, for example, Charles Ong's "A Season of 10,000 Noses," a tale so plausible and strange as to invite comparisons with the literary traditions of other former colonies of Spain in Latin America. In the same vein, Jonathan Jimena Siason's "Old Witch of San Jose" and Marianne Villanueva's "Black Dog" are told effortlessly in the comfortable style of good old barrio narration. Oscar Peñaranda's "The Price" exploits Filipino storytelling conventions only to upset them—the expectation of the miraculous is unfulfilled, leaving a harsh reality to fill the narrative vacuum. Likewise, Dean Francis Alfar's "Something Like That" describes a widely reported tragedy in Manila made all the more poignant with the repetition of that iconic Philippine English idiom that provides the story with its title.

Stories of the diaspora experience dominate the collection, but these are less satisfying, perhaps because they are not informed by any coherent "tradition" (even to react against stylistic conventions is to be oriented to them in some measure). It is the diaspora authors that have a tendency to give in, ever so slightly, to the temptation to be instructive rather than imaginative.

Surrounded by parents, teachers, and other symbols of authority, young adults do not want to be ambushed in their reading materials, and it is no surprise to me that JK Rowling enjoys as much of a following among young people in the Philippines as elsewhere in the world. After all, *Harry Potter* never pauses to tell you what to do or think.

Read this book, but do not be fooled by the fluffy promises of "transculturality" and "discourses of ethnicity." The writers prove that young-adult fiction comes of age when it leaves the classroom behind.

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Stuff. Daniel Miller, 2010. Malden, MA: Polity Press. 220 pp.

DANIEL Miller could not have chosen a more unremarkable title for his book. Miller started declaring his reticence or even refusal to define “stuff,” except to say that it was about “things.” He reasoned that “stuff works just fine.” While Miller might have his reasons for choosing his title, I believe that he should have made the title more interesting. I would not have paid any attention to his book if it were not a required reading for one of my graduate courses. Despite the nondescript title, Miller’s easy-reading prose yet graphic description, unorthodox but deeply nuanced analyses made the mundane very interesting.

Miller said that he does not subscribe to the conventional notion of “knowledge as best conveyed through clear definitions.” He lamented the tradition of “cleverness” in academia, which places much premium on debunking previously established interpretations and arguments. Miller argued for “understanding” rather than “cleverness.” He added that the “best way to understand, convey and appreciate our humanity, is through attention to our fundamental materiality.” His main objective here was to come up with a theory of things. He eschewed the overemphasis on representation, semiotics, linguistics, and metaphor, at the expense of the material. He exhorted anthropologists toward a refocusing on the materiality.

He acknowledged his gratitude for the provenance of his theoretical orientation mainly from Hegel, Marx, and Simmel, as well as from Levi-Strauss and Bourdieu. When trying to explain the ideas of these theorists, he seemed to adopt an irreverent tone but made them, I believe, more understandable. At the same time, Miller employed a self-deprecating style and humor that made his “irreverence” or flippancy “forgivable.”

Among the major important points that Miller raised in the first chapter included the following: (a) industrial and non-industrial societies are both material cultures—there may be a difference in the kinds and

volume of materials but acquisitive desire and behavior are present in both; (b) characteristic of modernity as exhibiting tendency to both universality and particularity; for Miller, among the purposes of anthropology is to reconnect these two and bring them back into dialogue; (c) dialectics of the relationship between stuff and a people—that we create or constitute things, but things also constitute us; (d) agency of individuals as well as the agency of stuff; and (e) a focus on function is not sufficient to capture the complexity of stuff.

He focused on common and taken-for-granted stuff, which were salient elements and aspects of the quotidian, such as clothing, housing, and new mass media and communication technology, among other things. He wanted to call attention to what he believed as neglected albeit important aspects of materiality. Four chapters of Miller's book are devoted in exploring materiality of various aspects of everyday life. For purposes of this review, I will focus on the Indian *sari* and on new communication technology.

The chapter "Clothing: Why Material Culture Is Not Superficial" is devoted to a critique on the conventional view of superficiality of clothing. Miller took issue with the semiotic approach to clothing—the view that the clothes merely represent the human subject, thus superficial and inconsequential. Miller argued that clothes are among an individual's most personal possessions, among the few objects that "know" our bodies intimately. Clothes, according to Miller, "are the main medium between our sense of the world and our sense of the external world."

Miller provided a very nuanced, detailed and in-depth description and analysis of the Indian *sari* and the *pallu*. For Miller, instead of the conventional analysis of how the Indian woman wears the *sari*, he focused on how the *sari* wears the Indian woman, or how the *sari* makes the wearer both a woman and Indian. Miller deconstructed the *pallu*, which is the highly decorated end of the *sari* that falls over the shoulder.

Miller described the many facets of the *pallu*, which include the following: (a) it is used by the mother as a "multi-purpose nursing tool"

and thus becomes instrumental in the mother-child bonding, and (b) it serves as a symbol for the child of the physical embodiment of the mother's love. Moreover, the pallu also serves as the woman's third hand when she goes about her household chores and daily routine. The sari and pallu can be used for many gestures that could be deemed either as modesty or as erotica. These characteristics are used to great effect by Bollywood and television soap operas.

The pallu's character of taken-for-grantedness is that which enables it to be deemed an extension of the woman's body. Miller argued that things are more powerful when they have been taken for granted. However, the pallu could also be the very object that betrays the Indian woman. It could be the thing that catches fire in the many cases of dowry killings and stove deaths in India. Sometimes, it is also the pallu that a desperate and unhappy Indian bride uses to hang herself with.

I have been familiar with the phenomena of stove deaths and dowry killing, but only after reading Miller did I begin to realize and associate the exoticized Indian sari or the pallu with the horror of stove deaths. Only then did I truly appreciate what Banerjee and Miller meant by the sari making the Indian woman. Indeed, no other piece of clothing clearly defines the wearer as much as the sari and pallu.

Another theme explored by Miller had to do with mass media and new forms of information and communication technology (ICTs) such as the Internet and mobile phones. New media technology gave rise to the possibility of mobile phone relationships and virtual relationships. The technoscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes (Appadurai 1996) have impacted profoundly on the ethnoscaping, agency, subjectivities, and the everyday life of people. A poor country like the Philippines has been heavily influenced by the new communication technology. Studies suggest that approximately 30 percent of the population has Internet access, and almost 50 percent has a mobile phone. The findings also suggest that Filipinos are among the most active users of social networking sites in Asia. The Philippines is also considered the world's leader in text messaging,

with Filipinos sending an average of 200 million mobile phone text messages a month (Agence France-Presse 2010).

Miller found out that an important purpose of mobile phone use by the poor in Jamaica is to maintain vast network of social relationships that could be possible sources of support for future financial and social needs. Miller cited Parreñas (2005) whose findings about Filipino diaspora and ICT showed as not very positive. Parreñas relates that mobile phones did not substantively contribute to fostering better communication and social ties between Filipino migrant workers and family left behind. In turn, this is contradicted by McKay's (2006) findings on Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong who, with the use of mobile phones, participate in "remote" micro-management of everyday life in Al-alinao Norte, La Union.

What is missing in Miller's accounts about media technology, such as the Internet and mobile phones, is the alarming rise in sex crimes related to these technologies. I eschew making direct correlation between crime and mass media consumption. I believe that primary socialization agencies like the family mediate the effects of ICT and mass media. However, I am convinced that mass media and ICTs have become influential socializing agencies that have profound effects on social and intimate relationships, including sexual violence. These new ICTs afford anonymity, which in turn gave rise to new forms of sex crimes against the trusting and naïve. Pertierra grants that there is a need for new notions of trust in the context of new forms of encounters under these new forms of communicative technology.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) of the Philippines has issued a warning against dating people met via TV chat rooms and random texting (Santos 2007). Unlike in previous years with a high incidence of incest rape, stranger rape has increased in 2010. The police partly attribute this to the Internet and social networking sites. Sex predators use Facebook and Twitter to find prospective victims (Kwok 2010). The NBI has several cases of sex video being uploaded by sex crime perpetrators who victimized women they met via the Internet and texting (Santos 2007).

Miller advocates for an anthropology “devoted to the comprehension and welfare of people in society.” Communicative technology is not something benign. It may have initially been created from good intentions but had evolved and is now being used for crimes. I argue that Miller and other media technology scholars should not neglect the increased incidence of sex crimes attendant with the new forms of communicative technology.

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Philippines in crisis: US power versus local revolt.

Donald Kirk, 2005. Manila: Anvil Publishing. 296pp.

BOOKS on Philippine politics and current affairs often straddle the territory between academic writing and journalism. Kirk's *Philippines in Crisis* belongs firmly on the journalism side of the spectrum. This is not surprising, as the author has spent most of his life as an Asian-based journalist. The result in this case is a book long on anecdote and opinion but lacking academic context and analysis. It would be unfair to judge a book of this sort by academic standards, however, so the question is whether the material Kirk assembles provides useful ancillary information for understanding the post-Marcos period the book focuses on.

Kirk canvasses a considerable range of anecdotally based issues and events in the decade after EDSA to support his view of a nation in continuing decline. These range over the post-closure fate of former US military bases in Subic Bay, Angeles, and Baguio, the effects of the Pinatubo eruption, the shenanigans of the anti-pedophile priest Shay Cullen, the failures of the Presidential Commission on Good Government to recover Marcos loot, and the Moro and Communist insurgencies in Mindanao, among other things.

The pervasive theme of Kirk's account is the continuity between the post-EDSA regime and the dynastic political system that survived the Marcos kleptocracy to reassert itself against postdictatorship demands for social justice. It would be a mistake to suppose that Kirk supports the nationalist left, however. He dismisses the reformist senator Jovito Salonga as an opportunist, portrays Subic Bay's Gordon clan as running a dictatorship, indicts the Communist Party of the Philippines for presiding over a "rampage of killing and burning" on Negros, and accuses the exiled Communist leader Joma Sison of sleazing in the Netherlands. The MNLF leader, Nur Misuari, fares a little better, but is bought off by President Ramos as (it is implied) a sticky conduit for money going to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Occasionally the anonymous poor emerge to condemn the corruption of the elite at home or the official indifference to their plight as overseas workers, but this book is short on identified Filipino political actors or political groups that act from anything but selfish motives. The nearest Kirk comes to a sympathetic rendering of a named Filipino is his portrayal of Major Chen Almacen, actually an American citizen, but an Igorot by birth, as a dispensable American scapegoat for Filipino looting at the bases.

Expatriate actors in the Philippines, on the other hand, are usually portrayed in either a neutral or a positive way. This includes not only American diplomatic and military staff but also expatriate Australian bar owners in Angeles City, and even some foreign victims of Father Cullen's anti-pedophile campaign. A notable exception to the favorable treatment of expatriates is Father Cullen himself. This negative view of Cullen is not surprising, as he supported the closure of the bases and Kirk believes this event was more of a negative watershed in modern Philippine history than the EDSA revolution was a positive one.

The lack of a broad critical framework means that Kirk reproduces the dubious NGO/UN-originating statistics that fuel the campaigns of people like Cullen. In the Philippines the imperative to structural reform has indeed been de-ideologized into reactionary moral crusades, but the West, including the United States, must share much of the blame for producing the framework that fuels these.

It is also true that post-EDSA political leaders have been more successful in producing symbolic moral declamations rather than substantive reform, but this does not mean they share the values of the provincial warlords, as Kirk suggests. Abinales points out that Aquino was successful in getting through legislation aimed against child abuse and rape but failed when it came to measures aimed at rural land reform and against political dynasties, not because of lack of personal commitment but because the former did not threaten the provincial elites while the latter did (Abinales 2008).

To answer the question raised at the beginning of this review, this book contains some interesting anecdotal material about events relating to the author's experiences. It is also an entertaining read. But its main interest is forensic. It is a well-written compilation of complaints typical of the marginalized and dwindling expatriate population of the Philippines. By reading Kirk's book you can get a sense of these grievances at home without risking the zealous hand of Father Cullen dragging you off to jail from your bar stool.

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Independent Researcher

Reference

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The anthropology of the new media in the Philippines.

Raul Pertierra, 2010. Quezon City: IPC Culture and Development Series, Ateneo de Manila University, 235 pp. [online] Available at: <http://www.ipc-ateneo.org/node/71>

THE ANTHROPOLOGY of the New Media in the Philippines is published, appropriately, on the Internet, and free to download. Pertierra felt a need not only to communicate the ideas about modern communication quickly and easily, and to make it as readily accessible as possible, but also to do so by means of the same medium of which he writes.

This book examines the uses and effects of new computer-mediated-interactive-communication technology (CMICT) in the lives of ordinary Filipinos—often in unexpected ways—noting as an example that the mobile phone, as a simple, relatively inexpensive device, has transformed the lives of peoples throughout the world.

So too has the Internet or the virtual world, which may offer opportunities not available in “real” life. Dispersed family members, lonely individuals, entrepreneurs, researchers, and anyone wishing to connect for whatever reason increasingly depend on this new technology. We live in an age where the requirements of communication across distances, cultural borders, temporal zones, political differences, economic needs, and personal situations affect our everyday lives.

While the economics of CMICT are often flouted and by now obvious, Pertierra has taken an anthropological approach, by which he means material is often drawn from ordinary narratives of everyday life. Anthropology’s concern is frequently about personal or family interests and the struggles to make sense out of an increasingly complex world. This world now extends far beyond local boundaries and includes strangers. No longer limited to familiars, far from home and exposed to new ideas, Filipinos nevertheless try to comprehend their experiences in culturally meaningful terms. One of the tasks of anthropology is to describe these attempts. Understandings of the self, the family, religion, and society are being reformulated as the world is transformed by forces of globalization, economic rationalization, and capitalist consumption. The new media are both an agent of this transformation as well as a lifeline to earlier cultural understandings. Thus, the new media do not only expedite communication but also generate new conditions of possibility.

The eight chapters of the book discuss in more detail many issues in relation to CMICT, such as social relationships and dating, virtual relationships, reading and intellectual skills, education, meaningfulness in or for life, economic impact/implications, social/economic in/equality, and politics, among others.

Chapter 1, “Living in an Age of Uncertainty,” presents a summary of the book’s main argument. It is often claimed that we are living in an age of uncertainty with extreme predictions that we are on the verge of a major evolutionary break and that CMICT is a truly revolutionary invention. But will society and culture be fundamentally transformed by

it? Thus the chapter examines how the new media affect people as they go about their normal everyday lives. The new technology is employed in a wide variety of activities, from keeping in touch with relatives and friends, seeking useful information about jobs and economic prospects to idly passing the time away. These activities have important consequences for social institutions such as the family, the economy, and even politics.

Pertierra outlines here the Philippine context of this technology: a shift from community to society, from a mode of life based on kinship and locality to one centering on the stranger and the national or global. This, and the surplus of information that CMICT provides, has led, ironically, to increasing uncertainty as people try to make sense of an excess of meanings. This semiotic explosion is quickly overtaking any attempts at maintaining past traditions and orderly expectations. Culture has become detached from a mode of life and instead becomes a paradigm for living, in which “free floating” global signifiers of meaning are independent of their context.

Chapter 2, “Are We Entering a New World Order?,” examines how transformative CMICT is and the claims for its consequences for social life. The control of fire, the domestication of plants and livestock, the invention of the wheel, and the discovery of writing, while truly revolutionary technologies were nevertheless relatively slow in producing significant transformations. By comparison, the electric lightbulb, the railway, the motorcar, and the telegraph achieved significant changes quickly. It is too early to predict whether the new communications technology belongs to the former category, but it is clear that its effects are being felt as quickly as the latter.

In this chapter Pertierra covers diverse issues: Is CMICT a truly revolutionary technology? Will society and culture be fundamentally transformed by the new technology? Is the Philippines likely to share in these revolutionary transformations? While there is little doubt that the mobile phone and the Internet have changed the lives of most Filipinos, it is too early to claim that the immediate future will be fundamentally transformed for the better.

Chapter 3 describes the anthropological context of “New and Expanded Networks” within which CMICT operates. New conditions of communication have arisen involving wide networks of both familiars and strangers. A possible result of this communicative expansion is the development of the public sphere, whose members, while having diverse interests, come together in trying to achieve a common understanding.

These expanded networks necessarily involve mediated relationships. A new virtual world has opened up, in which sex is a main commodity. Asian cam models (Mathews 2010) are only one element of this virtualization of sexuality, but it also includes online marriages, families, religion, and even online gift-giving and cyber friendships.

Chapter 4 presents a brief ethnography of “Cellphone and Internet Use in Buenavista” as an example of a poor, and technologically poor, rural municipality and its (lack of) access to the new media. The chapter illustrates how the new communication technology has the capacity to significantly expand social and cultural relationships, even in such a technologically impoverished location, through the use of internet cafes, the use of which can even take precedence over new clothes or shoes among teenagers. These expanded relationships have implications for local identity as well as for notions of community and globality. These are particularly relevant for the growing Filipino diaspora and for the increasing transnationalization of everyday life.

Chapter 5, “Case Studies Revisited,” examines four former informants (interviewed in 2005) and how their lives have changed in the intervening years while deeply involved in technologically mediated relationships and practices. All of these informants had related as much to their virtual selves as to their actual ones; several years later, they continue to use the new communication technology in diverse ways. These case studies aptly illustrate how the new technologies insert themselves into everyday lives and identities, such that our possessions can come to possess us.

Chapter 6 discusses the case of migrants and overseas workers and their communicative practices. Entitled the “Old & New: Migrants &

Overseas Workers,” this chapter continues with an explanation and illustration of the uses and insertion of technology among a people about whose migration is almost legendary. While much has been written about Filipino overseas contract workers (OCWs), Pertierra combines an anthropological and technological approach to show how OCWs and other migrants utilize this new technology to create both a new life and identity and maintain old ties, simultaneously connecting while also deepening the feelings of separation.

Chapter 7, “The New Media and Politics or the Politics of the New Media,” examines the effects of the new media on the political process. While the chapter perhaps diverges from the preceding ones, it nevertheless raises the issue of how technology now impacts on political participation and persuasion, so evident during political crises of the past 20 years when texting was utilized to rally popular opinion and participation. Despite the use of technology in this sphere, there has been remarkably little scholarship on it.

Chapter 8 returns to a more anthropological and sociological theme as it looks at the changes in cultural practices following the new communication technology. “New Media, New Culture or the End of Kultur?” discusses the various ways CMICT has shaped contemporary culture. The new media not only expand the possibilities for culture but also affect the way we experience it. No longer limited to face-to-face encounters, culture is increasingly mediated and globalized, and includes strangers as part of everyday life, containing images, practices, and representations drawn from afar. Contemporary culture becomes not only lived but also aspired to, imitated, and consumed, generating new identities and norms, and shaping new expectations.

Overall, although Pertierra develops a coherent and general perspective, each chapter has its own orientation and may be read separately. Unlike other scripts that often focus on a particular issue or aspect, and may be too technical, *The Anthropology of the New Media in the Philippines* considers the social, cultural, and political contexts and

effects in each arena. These are well illustrated by the numerous examples and case studies provided, to which, I am sure, most readers will be able to relate. By this means, Pertierra makes an interesting and entertaining manuscript that foreshadows much yet to be researched and fathomed, not only in the Philippines but more broadly—or should we say, globally.

Paul W. Mathews
Australian National University

Reference

Mathews, Paul. W. (2010). *Asian Cam Models: Digital Virtual Virgin Prostitutes?* Quezon City: Giraffe Books.



Narrative episodes from the Tulalang epic.

Hazel J. Wrigglesworth, Ampalid Ampatuan, Letipá Andaguer, and Adriano Ambangan, 2008. Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines. 274 pp.

While the very real threats of language endangerment in the Philippines and elsewhere have motivated linguists to pursue a program of description, less attention has been granted to the documentation of rare storytelling traditions. *Narrative Episodes from the Tulalang Epic* provides material evidence of just how precious oral epics truly are, and why it is important more than ever to share and understand them.

Ilianen Manobo storytellers of North Cotabato have been working with Hazel Wrigglesworth for four decades, and the latest results of their collaboration are astonishing. What is referred to as the “Tulalang epic” is a collection of oral stories, all of which involve the Ilianen Manobo culture hero, Tulalang, and his exploits. Of this tradition, four distinct episodes were selected for careful documentation and explanation: “The Famous Young-man Who Disguised Himself as a Monkey,” “The Children Who Were Septuplets,” and two versions of “The Woman Who Lived Alone.” Wrigglesworth is at pains to point out, however, that these names are her

own device—the Ilianen Manobo do not use titles to refer to their stories. In the introduction, Loren Billings draws attention to one of the most linguistically interesting aspects of the epic. Ilianen Manobo narrators use the much wider range of pronouns available in their language to direct the perspective of the audience. Thus, in a room full of people gathered to hear a story, as depicted on the front cover, the narrator makes heavy use of the dual-inclusive “we” as if there is only a single person present as his or her sole listener. Likewise, the singular “you” is frequently and effectively used to locate the listener in the midst of the action. The intimacy of such a technique is difficult to convey as neither pronouns exist in English.

Within an Ilianen Manobo story it is common to switch between person perspectives. Thus, for example, the narrator can produce sentences such as *Midambak se pilas te kayu kayi te tedtab ne medsandeng ka* (The young monkey then climbed a tree at the edge of the farm and you [singular] are looking out over it) to create an impression of zooming in and out of the situation. The cinematographic analogy is apt. As two characters meet, the pronominal “camera” might cut from one point of view to the other in the same sentence, then zoom out again into the third person. In such a way, “you” (singular) are encouraged to identify and sympathize with multiple protagonists. The complex use of tense is equally remarkable. Take, for instance, lines such as

Kenà iya egkevangan se lipetuan ini./ Medwaleng se lipetuan ne medteganen./ Nekeipus se edtegatnes ne mid-ipanew en, su dkelà iya se kegkeipeng din.

The chief could not be hindered from going./ So the chief is proceeding now and is getting dressed./ As soon as he finished dressing he then set out, because his anxiety was really very great!” (Wrigglesworth et al. 2008, pp. 22-23)

Again, these switches of time reference draw the listener into the center of events then out again to a more distant and perhaps more neutral perspective.

Beyond the stylistics, the stories themselves are vivid and engaging. I am fascinated by the way the narratives appear to be divided by the swidden cycle of clearing, burning, planting, and harvesting; the work seasons providing natural chapter-like boundaries. Interestingly, Wigglesworth has opted for a typological approach to categorizing the motifs of the stories via the Aarne-Thompson classification system. There is certainly merit in recognizing the universality of certain motifs and that explanations for narrative typologies are not necessarily found at the site of innovation.

However, I can't help feeling that in this instance the system overemphasizes the generalizability at the expense of the particular. To me the Tulalang epic is distinctively Austronesian and Southeast Asian. Balete trees and talking monkeys, for example, have enormous relevance in Visayan and Tagalog storytelling where the cultural connotations are surprisingly similar. The appearance of virtually identical motifs in both Manila and the jungles of North Cotabato has a historical and social import, and provides a worthy challenge to the contemporary indigenous/non-indigenous dualism in popular Filipino discourse (duly derided by William Henry Scott in looking for the pre-Hispanic Filipino). Ilianen Manobo storytelling may thus be experienced as different without being "other."

In addition to the challenges of translation there are countless difficulties in transforming an oral text into a written one. At the heart of the problem is the fact that the translation is simultaneously one of language and discourse. Wigglesworth has judiciously placed the Ilianen Manobo on even-numbered pages, and her annotated English translation on the facing page. While this solves some problems it creates others. There is, for example, no interlinear gloss but this is partially mitigated by the fact that the English itself is highly literal. Unfortunately, this literality produces

some very stilted prose; for example, on page 93: “When they came to what the monkey had said he had burned [in the belitù-tree], ...what they saw was that it hadn’t been burned well at all.” While Ilianen Manobo readers have access to “pure” text, English speakers are deprived of the literary aesthetics, and linguists are left without morphosyntactic guidance. The result is a thicket of footnotes that provide excellent cultural, linguistic, and literary information but also draw attention to what the English-speaking reader is really missing out on.

One possible solution might have been to provide the original text and an interlinearization on the even-numbered pages, with a freer and more literary English translation on the facing pages. After all, literary translation is more an art than a science and does not automatically imply a corruption of the original. Edward Fitzgerald’s famous translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* is a shining example of the aesthetic possibilities inherent in the form. It should be taken for granted that a good translation is, to a large extent, a retelling of a story, and not simply the processing of linguistic data. The volume is nonetheless a magnificent achievement of scholarship and sets a high standard for future documentation efforts.

Piers Kelly
Australian National University

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Narrative episodes from the Tulalang epic.

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Introduction

THIS ISSUE of the *Asian Studies Journal* deals with a condition—hybridity—which, although always a characteristic of society and culture, is now its major determinant. Even in times when people lived in isolated communities, social and cultural links always ensured an exchange of ideas and practices. Many of these were unconsciously adopted while others, although recognized as alien, were accepted. In addition, all societies and cultures experience change either through external forces or through internal ones such as the replacement of generations. Culture is not a solid body of traditions and norms but a way of living that adjusts to prevailing elements. It is always contestable and open to critique. Society, while exhibiting more stable features, is also open to change. Both culture and society should be seen as collective works in progress.

Societal and cultural change has been gathering momentum since the industrial revolution and promises to increase the pace of transformation even faster with the new communication technology. We have now, without doubt, entered the age of hybridity. The global condition is one of constant hybridization. Paradoxically, globality produces both similitude and difference. Being connected to others everywhere enables us both to expand who we are and to remain true to ourselves. These global connections make us appreciate similarities while confirming our own difference.

The new communication technology has enabled us to develop the capacity we have always had but never been able to fully accomplish. For the first time in human history we now have the capacity to remain in touch with anyone globally. This capacity will lead to significant transformations of society and culture whose full effects we can now only dimly predict. It has given us new forms of agency and, consequentially, new identities. These identities combine the old with the new in various manifestations of hybridity. Diaspora is now a common experience for Filipinos. International migration and overseas work generally require the maintenance of long-distance ties with their local communities. This easy access to the homeland generates a

condition of nonterritorial belonging. Filipinos overseas are now able to maintain ties both to their local communities and to their diasporic fellows. It gives them an absent presence. Those remaining at home partake of these new ties even if from another perspective.

This connectivity applies as much at the collective level as it does at the individual level. Globality expands individual as well as institutional networks. The nation-states' former autonomy is now being replaced by their ties to global institutions. These institutions, in turn, take an increasing interest in local issues. We now routinely recognize global trends as readily as local and regional ones. Often, global trends even take precedence over local ones. At other times the local is itself globalized. A new term such as glocality tries to capture this ambivalent and sometimes antinomian condition. Hybridity has now become a normal recognizable condition of culture and society. The essays in this collection illustrate how hybridity enters into and adapts itself in new cultural and social forms.

The article by Mizhelle D. Agcaoili on Filipino fansubbers aptly demonstrates the new hybridity. Steeped in their own local circumstances, fansubbers perform the task of cultural translators not only in terms of language but, as importantly, as local interpreters of foreign representations and practices. Their community consists both of online and offline interactions—each generating its own forms of hybrid practices. As Agcaoili convincingly shows, fansubbers operate mainly in cyberspace—a nonterritorial entity that encompasses global, local, and regional elements. They act both as consumers and producers of cultural products that, even as they consume and produce them, also reinterpret them. Hybridity here operates at different ontological levels: at the level of the Japanese text, their limited interpretation of these texts, and their translation into an acceptable Filipino English. Precisely because they are not professionally trained translators, their reinterpretations include both conscious and nonconscious elements. Fansubbers are a good example of how the global condition manifests itself locally. They are the new mediators of culture, occupying a position betwixt and between. Their liminal position facilitates their acceptance of hybridity.

Kanami Namiki discusses the way a national identity, created through the representations of dance, is based on elements patched together to produce a hybridized whole. The Bayanihan dance group is a well-known ambassador of Philippine national culture. It portrays the nation as a rich tapestry of local dance traditions. The result is a grand spectacle meant to awe its audience by displaying formal dancing skills and corresponding visual and colorful images. The nation is represented as a seamless whole whose parts unproblematically fit together. This national image is clearly a compilation of local and often heterogeneous elements unified under the banner of national culture. Hence the group's name: Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company. This hybrid entity is far removed from its folk origins and represents a Philippine national imaginary. In contrast, the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group chooses to represent local dance traditions without the elaborate and formal dance techniques of the Bayanihan. The national imaginary of the Obusan group is less concerned with elevating the local to the level of the national and in the process transforming it to fit national models. Instead, the Obusan group adheres more closely to folk styles, including an evocation of their milieu. Their dances are meant as much to inform the audience about local traditions as to entertain them. The national imaginary is still hybrid but one whose pieces retain their connection to locality. In this view the nation consists of discrete local traditions welded into a national society. While the first national imaginary is cultural, the second is societal. They are two different but related ways of imagining the nation. These two conceptions of the national imaginary are endorsed by the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The Bayanihan stresses cultural continuity and coherence, whereas the Obusan group emphasizes the local and its contribution to national society.

José S. Buenconsejo's article offers a detailed discussion of a particular cultural expression, the film *Ibong Adarna* (1941), and how the Buencaminos deliberately merged traditional and modern musical elements. The film deals with a well-known folk myth about a hero who goes on a quest to save his father and in the process finds his own beloved. The myth itself is a premodern example of hybridity, combining oral

tradition with more recent literary versions gleaned from Hispanic sources. The Buencaminos were competent musicians trained in the traditional musical genres but who quickly adapted themselves to fit the needs of an emerging cultural modernity. Apart from the Buencaminos, *Ibong Adarna* was made for a mainstream audience by a group of properly trained directors and cinematographers. *Ibong Adarna* is a combination of older genres translated into film by people competent in both traditional and contemporary culture.

The paper mostly discusses the music in the film and how different musical styles were both consciously and unconsciously employed. The Buencaminos employed earlier genres such as the *comedia*, *sarsuwela*, and *bodabil* as both musical styles and narrative structures. Imposed on these earlier genres was a contemporary Hollywoodish music to evoke appropriate moods. Some of these elements were employed unreflectively while others were used for ironic purposes, indicating a more conscious awareness of hybridity. Buenconsejo's discussion is quite detailed, and a more proper presentation would require visual as well as audio cues. His main point is to argue that while this film and other similar cultural products drew from established western sources, the final product reflected a Filipino aesthetic. This aesthetic, while hybrid, nevertheless constitutes its own field not reducible to its borrowed sources. Buenconsejo's paper is a complex discussion of musical hybridity and the role of irony at a time when Filipino culture was experiencing a moment of transformation from the traditional to the modern. Although the roles of the director and cinematographer are not explicitly discussed, what emerges is the artistic tension in a mainstream production fusing older with newer cultural forms.

Tomoko Onoe's article is a close ethnographic description of a Kalinga healing ritual: *gopas*. It consists of a complex set of offerings, chants, dance, music, and feasting performed over two days. Its main purpose is to obtain a spirit-guardian to protect one from illness. Like many other inhabitants of the Cordillera, the Kalinga, while having converted to Christianity a century ago, still retain many beliefs and practices linked to their precolonial past. Most of these are related to

environmental spirits whose activities impact most closely on everyday life such as sickness, accidents, or any unusual events. The Christian God, like Kabunian, remains rather distant, but one's immediate surroundings are the domain of several spirit beings. Some of these are good and protective, while others cause illness and even death. Their appeasement is necessary if one is to ensure good health and prevent misfortunes.

The gopas ritual is meant to entice a protective spirit to ensure a person's well-being. Onoe approaches her analysis by emphasizing the symbolic rather than the instrumental aspects of gopas. Toward the end of the ritual, a liminal condition, characterized by play, is seen as a key symbolic element. The formal behavior of the ritual is inverted through unscripted and comedic actions by the shaman and the spectators. Eventually, ritual action resumes and the procedure is soon terminated. Onoe's focus on the importance of play as an element in ritual is consistent with her culturalist stance. Gopas is seen as an attempt to restore cognitive order following the disruption of everyday life such as sickness. Play is an important element in the restoration of order. While this paper does not explicitly deal with hybridity, its context clearly indicates how Kalinga life and culture, under the aegis of globalization, consists of shreds and patches of tradition and modernity. While the gopas ritual is encased in tradition, its application and extension to foreigners indicates how it has adapted to conditions of globality.

I congratulate the contributors for their interesting and important insights on this topic. I particularly wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes for organizing the panel at a conference in Japan that served as the impetus for this collection. Professor Yoneno-Reyes not only encouraged our participation at the conference but also edited and put together this collection.

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