

MUSLIM - FILIPINO LITERATURE

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To speak of Muslim-Filipino literature in the Philippines is to bring to our mind what Nick Joaquin referred to as "the exotic branch of our writing."¹ and although Joaquin had in mind particularly the stories of a Muslim writer, Ibrahim Jubaira, his words describe aptly to my mind this branch of our literature representing the Southern Philippines. In this paper, I do not intend to discuss our Muslim creative writers — there are so few of them really, Jubaira and Abdul Sampulna among them — but of the vast amount of oral literature which have been gathered and analyzed during the past three decades by folklorists, cultural anthropologists and scholars in this part of the country.

Actually, it is a little bit disturbing to think that in spite of the fact that the Muslims in our midst constitute something like 23.7% of the total population of the Mindanao region² or 1,313,613 Filipinos professing the Islamic religion, our ignorance of and/or indifference to their culture, art and literature is almost complete. Obviously, a situation like this cannot be attributed to mere ignorance or indifference; it would be more correct to say that the situation is deeply rooted in prejudice and misinformation.

Our literary historians for instance have been remiss in their work. Teofilo del Castillo and Buenaventura Medina, for specific examples, devote a mere ten pages to Muslim-Filipino literature and mention only two folk epics as existing among the Muslims.³ Jose Villa Panganiban, similarly, presents twelve pages in his book.⁴ Both volumes contain glaring errors of facts — a deplorably too-common phenomenon concerning our knowledge of the Muslims of this country.

¹Nick Joaquin "The Young Writers" in *Literature and Society: A Symposium* (Manila: A. S. Florentino, 1964), p. 72.

²The Mindanao region refers to the region comprising Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan. *Vide* MDA 1967-1968 Annual Report (Davao City: Mindanao Development Authority, May 1969).

³Teofilo del Castillo & Buenaventura S. Medina, Jr., *Philippine Literature: From Ancient Times to the Present* (Quezon City: 1964) pp. 40-50.

⁴Jose Villa Panganiban, *A Survey of the Literature of the Filipinos* (Manila: 1962), Mimeo, ed., pp. 38-50.

But now, in the light of the so-called Muslim-Christian conflicts raging in predominantly Muslim areas, specifically northern Cotabato and large portions of Lanao del Sur, we are forced to take a more serious view of our relations with our Muslim brothers. Perhaps a knowledge of their oral literary traditions will help in an initial understanding of this people.

The plan of this paper is to present the main bulk of Muslim literature — in the form of their folk epics, folk tales and stories, riddles and other literary artifacts, in so far as these have been gathered, recorded, and analyzed in the researches of scholars. It is of course to the folklorists and cultural anthropologists that we turn for a more authentic and accurate picture of existing Muslim literature.

I. Muslim Ethno-epics

In introducing discussion of Muslim ethno-epics, I should like to quote lengthily a passage from Datu Gumbay Piang.

. . . The Moros, because of their contact with Arabic and Hindu cultures — more than any other group of people in the Philippines — and their success in defending themselves against Spanish domination, possess the largest body of Philippine pre-Spanish literature in the archipelago, but they have, unfortunately, been preserved all these centuries only in oral form, handed on from one generation to the next inside crowded mosquito nets during the late hours of tranquil nights. The culture of the Moros was far ahead of that of any other group in the Philippines when the Spaniards came, and their political, social and religious standards remained firm and unshaken in spite of the Spanish campaigns against them. By nature, the Moros are a docile and peaceful people, but circumstances have made them a proud, obstinate, and warlike race . . .

The Moros do have "an amazingly rich literature." The Maranao group is rich in lyric and epic poetry. The Maguindanaos possess a wonderful collection of folk tales in prose. The Joloanos, also, possess both poetry and prose, but I rather believe that the best Moro fairy tales and hero stories are found in the Cotabato valley and the best Moro poetry in Lanao. The literature of the Mindanao pagan peoples also shows much Moro influence. The highest type of literature among the Moros of Mindanao is the darangan. The bayok (chiefly lyrical) comes next, then the fairy and hero tales, the fables, etc., and, finally, the songs.⁵

⁵"Notes on Moro Literature," *Philippine Magazine*, vol. 28, no. 8 (Jan. 1932), p. 413.

We do not have an exact counting of the number of ethno-epics among the Muslim groups, but among those already recorded and published, we can safely number among authentic folk epics the ff: (1) The **Darangan**, a generic term referring to a cycle of epic stories revolving around the figure of the Maranao folk hero, Bantugan; (2) **Indarapatra and Sulayman**, existing among the Magindanaons of Cotabato; (3) **Parang Sabil**, among the Tausugs of the Sulu area; (4) **Silungan**, among the natives of Siasi, also of Sulu; (5) **Maharadia Lawana**, also among the Maranaos of Lanao. Other ethno-epics have been "discovered" among Muslim groups, but these still exist in hundreds of spools of tape-recorders, waiting to be transcribed, translated, and analyzed. Worthy of note here is the recently discovered Maranao version of *Indarapatra and Sulayman*⁶ containing more than 3,000 lines done by Mr. Nagasura Madale of the Mindanao State University. The work has already been translated into English and analysis is being done with the materials which is three times longer than the Maguindanao version mentioned above.

(1) **The Darangan.** The first man to stumble upon this epic is an American surgeon, Ralph S. Porter, who in 1900 reported of a "legend of the Mohammedan tribes." This is actually the story of Bantugan, and although Porter did not include any text of the narrative, he mentioned that "Bantugan is the national hero, and every child is taught the story of Bantugan until he almost knows it by heart."⁷ Thirty years later, Dr. Frank Laubach will re-discover the same story. Dr. E. Arsenio Manuel relates to us the interesting manner whereby Dr. Laubach secured the story of Bantugan.

... In February 1930 Frank Laubach, the literary crusader and educator, found himself on a boat with Muslims who participated in the Manila Carnival of that year; they were returning to Mindanao. Laubach was attracted by the singing which turned out to be the epic Bantugan; and upon landing on shore he busied himself locating singers who could help him put the song on record. The result was the publication of the Bantugan epic in Romanized form.⁸

⁶The MS. was shown to the author during the meeting of the members of the Philippine Folklore Society, August (?) 1971 in the house of Dr. Maximo Ramos. The MS. is being prepared together with analysis as an M.A. thesis in Anthropology at U.P.

⁷*Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 15, no. 58 (July-Sept. 1902), pp. 143-161.

⁸E. A. Manuel, *Agyu: The Ilianon Epic of Mindanao* (Manila: U.S.T. Press, 1969), p. 21.

The English text runs to approximately 1,104 lines. Because of the length of the epic, only a synopsis can be given below:⁹

Synopsis. Learning that his brother Bantugan has been paying court to Babalai Anonan of All-the-Land-Between-Two-Seas, the King of Bumbaran decrees that no subject should ever talk to him upon his return. When King's council is gathered, some members ask that the decree be reconsidered for it is a cruel one; further, they assert that Bantugan has no peer and that this man is the defender of the King. The King says determinedly that should there be any opposition, he would leave Bumbaran and establish another residence in the hinterland. Some gallants depart, Madali and Mabaning being dissatisfied with the decision.

A bell ringing from his blade is heard announcing the arrival of Bantugan. But no one greets him. The King refuses to answer him, and so with other gallants. He sees his son whom he smothers with kisses; his sister explains that the king is old and must be excused, combs and oils his hair, ties it into a knot. Bantugan bids farewell to his son, to his sister "until we meet in paradise." Women weep. He is overtaken by rain; crestfallen, he tears off his attire, puts down his blade and rests under a baliti tree. He calls on his diwata and magaw, spirit protectors, who lift him to a palace where Princess Timbang is sewing. The Princess offers a hammock and betel-chew, touches his feverish forehead, and calls a sorceress to give a remedy to the ailing man.

Bantugan dies and the king of All-the-Land-Between-Two-Seas shows concern, orders the body placed in a royal bed in the center of the hall, decked with flags and flowers. Gongs are beaten to gather subjects to identify the unknown man. Ten thousand come, but no one can tell the dead man's name. Bantugan's parrot comes and swoons beside his master; upon being resuscitated by water poured over its head, the bird identifies his master. The King decides to take the body in state on his fleet. The Princess sends the parrot to Bumbaran to inform people; the message throws them in consternation and grief and the King faints.

Mabaning and Madali, both gallants, ride on magic shields to the sky world; arriving at its portal, they are directed to another gate which they reach in a month. Mabaning transforms himself into a lovely lass so that Angel of the Dead mistakes him and think "perhaps the gods have given me a wife;" he receives a proposal from Angel to be his bride. Mabaning asks where the fruit of heaven, korna, may be

⁹E. A. Manuel, *A Survey of Philippine Folk Epics* (In *Asian Folklore Studies*, vol. XXII, 1963, Tokyo, pp. 37-39.

found, but Angel does not know and says he would go to the fifth heaven to find out. Mabaning shouts where Bantugan is and a "tiny voice as soft as music floating from a flute" answers from a corked bottle, which he grabs. He now rejoins Madali, and the two gallants ride back to Bumbaran where Bantugan lies in state. Mabaning opens the bottle and out comes a soul which rejoins and reincarnate Bantugan to life. There is much rejoicing.

Meanwhile Bumbaran is invaded by enemies upon learning that Bantugan is dead. Hero calls on his diwata and magaw for assistance, and he rides on his magic shield cutting down his enemies; but fatigue overtakes him, he is encircled, is shoved down into the water. A crocodile lashes him back onto the deck, and he gets locked up by his enemies. The other warriors, becoming exhausted, go home to rest. Bantugan regains his strength, takes command of a ship, and the fleet moves without oars. Bantugan heads for other lands and takes the fair Maginar for a wife; sails to Sun Girina Ginar and takes Princess Minoyod for another wife; goes to Bagumbayan Luna and takes Princess Magindawan; to All-the-Land-Between-Two Seas and takes Princess Timbang; to Solawan a Rogon and takes Bolontai a Pisigi; and forty other women. He sails back and lands at Bumbaran with the princesses and ladies where he is smothered with kisses by the people, but escapes from them by hiding.

The version summarized above constitutes but two cycles of the Bantugan epic, and Dr. Laubach's sub-titles for the two portions are "How Bantugan Died Below the-Mountain-by-the-Sea," and "How Bantugan Came back from Heaven." But Emma Marohombsar testifies that the Bantugan epic is extremely long:

*Of all the epics, the story of Bantugan is the most widely told. It consists of several long narrative poems which treat of the adventures of one legendary hero. All of these poems are arranged in a series, one being a sequence to the other. According to some Maranao story tellers, there are more than fifteen of these long narrative poems which make up the epic.*¹⁰

Some of these songs are still being rendered in song, and Marohombsar gives their individual titles as: *Kapuminangoan, Diwata-daogiban, Kapagandoga and Kabulambayoan, Kapungunsayan, Kam-bagombayan, Kanggindolongan, Baratama Lomna, Gandingan, Alognan, Pisuyanan, Kapurinandang, and Kapumabaning.* The author himself was able to secure one song from an educated Maranao, Ab-

¹⁰Vide E. A. Manuel, A. Survey . . . p. 36. Dr. Manuel gives the source of Emma Marohombsar's article from an unpublished MS. titled *Maranao Folklore*, 1957.

dullah Madale, and this portion titled "The Death of Paramata Bantugan." This version follows closely Laubach's version, especially the first part. I am reproducing this version in the brief collection below.¹¹

The possibility of finally making a complete recording of this Bantugan cycle of epic songs is now assured with the field work done by Dr. Juan Francisco of the U.P. Asian Center. During the 1968-69 school year, the author was informed by Dr. Francisco in a brief meeting at the Mindanao State University at Marawi that the cycle has finally been transcribed in 20 thick ledger books in the Maranao Arabic script. What started as an accidental discovery by Ralph S. Porter, followed by a fortunate re-discovery by Dr. Laubach -- will ultimately be concluded in the publication of what perhaps may come out as the first authentic folk epic among the Muslims. As Dr. Laubach wrote:

*This darangan and the four others which the Moros sing have great historical importance. In fact they are the only important survivals of the ancient Philippine civilization. The Spanish friars who followed Magellan to the Philippines were so zealous in stamping out paganism that they destroyed every ancient document and even almost succeeded in destroying the ancient alphabets. There is evidence that a large amount of this literature at one time existed but among the Christian tribes none of it survived.*¹²

But of course aside from its great historical importance -- the *darangan* embodies and validates the beliefs, customs, ideals, and life-values of the Maranaos. It is recorded by Dr. Laubach that he heard this epic chanted -- "every night as one passes Moro homes. Women weep at the most pathetic passages . . . Everybody applauds at the triumph of the heroes . . ." We can therefore understand a Maranao's pride when he writes of this epic:

These themes and actions of the epic to which the Maranao today respond provide important clues to the understanding of Maranao behavior, for they are crystallizations or symbolic representations of the underlying imagery and ideology of Maranao society. As we observe and understand these things at which the men applaud, those

¹¹Much of the materials included in this brief study are copyrighted, but Abdullah Madale's collection has appeared in a multilith process brought out by the MSU Institute of Research for Filipino Culture titled *A Preliminary Study of Maranao Folk Literature*, Marawi City: 1966.

¹²"An Odyssey from Lanao," *Philippine Public Schools*, vol. 3, no. 8 (Nov. 1930), 359-373, no. 9 (Dec. 1930), 459-468.

*characters of the heroes after which the children pattern themselves — as we see what these are, we learn about the kinds of themes which can be used is appealing to the Maranao.*¹³

(2) *Indarapatra and Sulayman*. This Maguindanao epic was first recorded by Dr. Najeeb M. Saleeby, a Lebanese surgeon who was attached to the American forces occupying Mindanao. But Dr. Saleeby described this heroic poem involving Sulayman and Indarapatra as "The Mythology of Mindanao" — not realizing that he had stumbled on a major Muslim epic.¹⁴ Since the Saleeby version was derived from Datu Kali Adam, who in turn learned it from the late Maharaja Mayla of Magindanao [i.e., Cotabato] and from Alad, we can accept the authenticity of the epic's provenance. But the story of Indarapatra and Sulayman as recorded by Saleeby (no text was presented by Saleeby) was rendered in prose; thus, in 1929, Frank Lewis Minton, using the Saleeby version as a basis, rendered the story in verse form entitled "Indarapatra and Sulayman, an Epic of Magindanao."¹⁵ We are incorporating the Saleeby version in the collection, but a brief synopsis is given below for purposes of analysis.¹⁶

Synopsis. Long ago Magindanao was covered by water and the sea extended all over the lowlands and nothing could be seen but mountains. The people lived on the highlands in both sides. They were many and prosperous and villages and settlements arose everywhere. But their peace did not last long for there appeared in the land monsters which devoured human beings they could reach. One of these terrible monsters was Kurita. It had many limbs and lived partly on land and partly in the sea. It haunted Mount Kabalalan and it did away with all animal life in that place.

¹³Mamitua Saber, "Darangan: The Epic of the Maranao," *Philippine Sociological Review*, v. IX, nos. 1-2 (Jan. April, 1961), p. 42; also *Jour. of History*, y. 10, no. 3 (Sept. 1962), p. 322-329.

¹⁴Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law, and Religion*, (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1905), pp. 16-20.

¹⁵Frank Lewis Minton, "Indarapatra and Sulayman: An Epic Magindanao," *Magazine*, vol. 26, no. 4 (Sept. 1929), 200-202, 236.

Antonia F. Villanueva, "The Philippine Epics," in *UNITAS* vol. 41, No. 2 (June, 1968), Quarterly Review of Arts and Sciences Published by the U.S.T., pp. 166-168.

The second monster was Tarabusaw, an ugly creature who has the form of a man, but was very much larger. It was extremely voracious and spread terror far and wide. It haunted Mt. Matutum and its neighborhood.

The third was a monstrous bird called Pah. This bird was so large when on the wing that it covered the sun and produced darkness underneath. Its egg was as large as a house. It haunted Mount Bita and the eastern Ranas region. It devoured the people and devastated the land. The people feared this bird and they hid in the caves of the mountains.

The fourth was a dreadful bird also which had seven heads. It lived in Mt. Gurayn and the adjacent country.

News of the havoc wrought by these four monsters reached the ears of King Indarapatra of the kingdom called Mantapuli. The terrible news grieved him extremely so he sent for his brother Sulayman who was greatly moved by the sad news that he consented to come.

King Indarapatra handed to his brother his magic ring and his kris, Juru Pakal, and wished him safety and success. But before they parted, Indarapatra planted a tree near a window of his palace. He said that by that tree he would know what was happening to his brother. If the tree thrived, Sulayman was safe; but if it drooped, something was amiss.

Thus armed Sulayman flew to the land laid waste by Kurita on Mt. Kabalalan where he found complete devastation. The many limbed monster came out and they had a terrible fight. Finally, the hero killed the monster.

Mt. Matutum was Sulayman's next stop. Tarabusaw, the hairy terror tore big branches of trees and used them to strike Sulayman, but the hero was triumphant again.

Pah was next and Sulayman succeeded in killing the giant bird but one of its severed wings fell on Sulayman, killing him.

King Indarapatra in Mantapuli saw the plant before his window droop and he knew that something terrible happened to Sulayman. Sad at heart, he got up, put on his sword and belt, and came to Mindanao to search for his brother. He travelled in the air with wonderful speed and came to Mt. Kabalalan first. He looked around and saw the bones of Kurita. He concluded that his brother had been there. At Matutum, he saw the bones of Tarabusaw but Sulayman was not there. So he went on to Mt. Bita to resume his search. There he saw the dead bird on the ground, and when he lifted the severed wing, he saw the bones of Sulayman and recognized them by means of the sword that was lying beside them. As he looked at the sword and at the bones, he was overwhelmed with grief and he wept. Raising his head,

he beheld a small jar of water near him. He knew that the jar came from heaven, so he took it and poured its water on Sulayman's bones, and he came to life again. Sulayman stood up, greeted and talked with Indarapatra who thought that he was dead, but Sulayman assured him that he had not died but he had only gone to sleep. King Indarapatra rejoiced and happiness filled his heart. After that Sulayman returned to Mantapuli, but Indarapatra went to Mt. Gurayn. There he met the dreadful bird with seven heads which he killed with his sword, Juru Pakal.

After destroying the monster bird, and having restored peace and safety to the land, King Indarapatra searched for the people who might have escaped destruction. One day he saw a beautiful woman in the distance and he hastened to meet her, she disappeared quickly through a hole in the ground. Having become tired and hungry, he sat on a rock to rest. Then he saw a pot full of uncooked rice and fire on the ground in front of it. He cooked the rice, but while he was occupied he heard laughter and a person exclaimed, "O, what a powerful man." He turned around and saw an old woman, who related about their escape from the monsters, and that her husband was hiding in the hollow of a tree, and the rest of the people were in a cave in the ground. She led him to a large cave. One side were the apartments of the datu and his family. He was ushered before the datu who rejoiced when he heard that the monsters were all dead and they could come out and reinhabit the land. Then he saw the beautiful girl again. She was the daughter of the datu, who gave her to Indarapatra in marriage to show his appreciation and gratitude.

The people came out of the cave and returned to their homes, where they lived in peace and prosperity again.

As an additional note in his version, Dr. Saleeby threw a few statements regarding this story:

Raja Indarapatra is the mythological hero of Magindanao and Mantapuli is his city. These names are very frequently mentioned in Moro stories, and various miracles are ascribed to them.

Kabalalan, Matutum, Bitu, and Gurayn are the most prominent and picturesque peaks of Mindanao and Ranao with which the Moros are familiar. The whole narration is native and genuine, and is typical of the Magindanao style and superstitions. Some Arabic names and Mohammedan expressions have crept into the story, but they are really foreign and scarcely affect the color of the story.

The animal Kurita seems to bear some resemblance to the big crocodiles that abound in the Rio Grande River. Tarabusaw may signify a large variety of apes. A heinous bird is still worshipped and is

greatly feared by the Tirurays and Manobos who live in the mountains south of Cotabato. The hateful balbal, in which all Moros believe, is described as a night bird, and its call is supposed to be familiar and distinctly audible at night.

What relation to names of Rinamuntaw and Rinayung bear to the ancestors of the Ranao Moros . . . will be very interesting to find out in the future.¹⁷

But Dr. Saleeby is quite definite regarding the origin of the monstrous bird called *Pah*. In the footnote he believes that the word is a "corruption of the bird *Rock* or *Rokh*, mentioned in the Arabian Nights." Indarapatra's sword *Juru Pakal* is again a "corruption of the Arabic word *Thul-Fakar*, the name of the famous sword of Caliph Ali . . . a noted warrior."¹⁸

It is probably worth nothing here that studies made on possible Hindu or Sanskrit influences in the Philippines, not only in terms of loan-words, but likewise parallelism of folk motifs had revealed that the two epics just discussed -- the *Bantugan* epic and *Indarapatra and Sulayman* had been carried from India through the Malay or Javanese.¹⁹ The plant figure motif, for instance, in *Indarapatra and Sulayman*, i.e., when King Indarapatra gave Sulayman a ring and a sword, then planting a sapling by his window, saying, "By this I will know your fate. For, if it grows, you will be saved, but if it withers or dies then fate is against you." This motif is found in many folktales of Bengal.²⁰

The coming to life again motif, found in both the *Bantugan* story and the *Indarapatra and Sulayman* epic, makes it quite clear that our two folk epics have cultural affinities with existing Hindu stories, especially in the Savitri episode of the *Mahabharata* of India. Those interested in following up this fascinating migration of folk motifs are referred to Dr. Juan Francisco's volume.

¹⁷Najeeb M. Saleeby, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁹Juan R. Francisco, *Indian Influences in the Philippines*, in *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, vol. XXVIII, Nos. 1-3 (Jan.-Sept., 1963), pp. 162-187 *et seq.*

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 167.

(3) *Parang Sabil*. Since I do not possess a copy of this Tausug epic of Sulu, I should like to reproduce here the findings of Dr. E. Arsenio Manuel in the two monographs mentioned above. This epic is in the possession of the late Professor H. Otley Beyer; apparently it was submitted by Julpa Schuck as a term paper in a course in anthropology. The MS. is only a fragment, and tells of the adventures of Sali Bangsawan. A magazine article written by Jose F. Rodriguez describes this epic as still very much alive with the Sulu Moro.²¹ Dr. Manuel concludes his brief discussion on this Sulu epic thus:

*The epic appears to consist of several songs, each of which is complete by itself. Men and women sing it plaintively, sometimes accompanied by the gapang, a bamboo xylophone, either by the singer himself or by a some other accompanist. These are sung either in the day or evening.*²²

(4) The *Silungan* epic of Siasi. As with the Tausug epic, our main source of information here is Dr. Manuel:

*Another Sulu epic known as Silungan was reported by Asaad Usman of Siasi, Sulu Archipelago. The original typewritten copy of the song of 789 lines was sent by Usman to the Asian Foundation [Manila] dated at Siasi on August 1, 1953; and it was mimeographed by the Asia Foundation on June 17, 1957, and a copy of the same furnished Prof. H. Otley Beyer, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of the Philippines. The text is in the dialect of Siasi and no English translation has yet been made. The epic requires more than a week of singing, according to Usman . . .*²³

(5) *Maharadia Lawana*. The last folk epic in prose to be recorded is this intriguing tale originally titled *Radia Mangandiri, A Lanao Version of the Hindu Ramayana*.²⁴ I was in Marawi myself, when Dr. Juan R. Francisco was shown this MS. by Dr. Saber. But let us allow Dr. Francisco to tell his story:

²¹Jose F. Rodriguez, "Parang-Sabil, Epic of Moroland," *Saturday Mirror Magazine*, Dec. 11, 1954, pp. 28-30.

²²E. A. Manuel, *Agyu: The Ilianon Epic* (1969), and "Survey of Philippine Folk Epics" (1963).

²³E. A. Manuel, *Survey of Philippine Folk Epics*, p. 46.

²⁴Mamitua Saber & Severino L. Velasco, *Radia Mangandiri, A Lanao Version of the Hindu Ramayana*, (Marawi City: n.d.) TS., 107 pp.

The text was shown to me by Dr. Mamitua Saber, Director of the University Research Center, Mindanao State University at Marawi City, during one of our discussions on the various aspects of Maranaw language and literature. It is entitled "Maharadia Lawana: A Lanao Prose Version of the Ramayana, A Celebrated Hindu Poem," and on the last leaf of the text, after the word *Tamat* (*finis*), is an "inscription" — "As recorded by MS (Mamitua Saber) and Severino Velasco; related by Bai Pomoki.

By the time Dr. Saber showed me this text, my knowledge of Maranaw had somewhat improved after a few weeks of intensive lessons. On going over the text, I recognized immediately that, even without the title, the tale is, indeed, derived from, or more appropriately tells of, similar episodes in the abduction and recovery of Sita as told in the Rama epic, and not exactly a "version of the Ramayana . . ."

The tale is known throughout the lake area. This may be due to the fact that in the *darangen*, a similar episode telling of the abduction and subsequent recovery of Princess Lawanen is the most frequently told portion of the epic. And, since the *darangen* version is chanted and only during special occasions, the prose version in the language of the masses is easily understood in contrast to the language of the *darangen*, which is relatively archaic or classical. It is most popular among gatherings of less serious nature.²⁵

While I do not intend to discuss at great length the narrative element of *Maharadia Lawana*, I cannot help but reflect on the significance of this prose-epic in our understanding on the problem of Mindanao contact history with the rest of South East Asia, especially Malaysia, Indonesia — and ultimately, India. An extensive literature is building up on the influence of the Rama story in the literature of Malaya, Indonesia, Borneo and other countries in South-east Asia.²⁶

²⁵Juan R. Francisco, *Maharadia Lawana*, Publication of the Philippine Folklore Society, (Quezon City: 1969), pp. 2-3.

²⁶*Vide*, Alfredo T. Tiamson, *Mindanao-Sulu Bibliography: A Preliminary Survey*, (Davao City: Ateneo de Davao, 1970).

Summary. Of the five Muslim ethno-epics we have discussed above, we have seen that the epic tradition in Mindanao among the Muslims is very extensive. Dr. Juan R. Francisco reported to the Members of the Philippine Folklore Society (1971) that three additional epics are in existence among the Muslims of southern Cotabato. Together with the Maranao version of *Indarapatra and Sulayman* recorded by Nagasura T. Madale, and the eventual working over of additional *darangen* among the Maranaos, we can be very certain then that this treasure-house of folk wisdom among our Muslim brothers will be preserved for generations to come.

An additional comment is now in order regarding the other literary artifacts among the Muslims. Although not as exciting as the discovery of a "new" epic, the recording of folk tales, legends, even riddles and wise sayings among Muslims likewise reveals the rich oral traditions of this people.

II. Muslim Folk Tales and Legends

The year 1966 is a red-letter day among collectors of folk oral traditions. For this year saw the publication of two volumes of folk tales. Dr. Robert D. McAmis, Lutheran connected with the Dansalan Junior College, prepared his volume in connection with the Mindanao Conference at the University of Chicago Philippine Studies Program. The volume, as brought out by the same university is titled *An Introduction to the Folk Tales of the Maranao Muslims of Mindanao in the Southern Philippines*. Seventeen stories, recorded *in situ*, and provided crude but readable English are included in the volume. Dr. McAmis tells us that many of these stories are told in Maranao in the *madrassa* schools around the lake. The folk tales are often intended for instruction in history and character building. But several tales are told at special celebrations, and these are given in Malay-type of chant similar to Arabic chants used by other Muslims. Often the chanting of the story will continue all night. Many archaic expressions are often used by the chanters that often even the Maranaos themselves are unable to follow the narrative. Perhaps this might indicate the antiquity of some of the stories. The chanters usually recite from memory; some stories are sold in mimeographed editions with the Maranao written in Arabic script. I have several of these stories which I bought at the Muslim market in Marawi City.

Maranao folk tales generally can be subdivided into types:

(1) Stories about Muhammad. An example is "A True Story of Muhammad and the Story of Paradise and Hell." A brief summary is given by Dr. McAmis:

Here the angel, Gabriel, first takes Muhammad on a guided tour of Hell where they see different women suffering the various torments of the damned. In each case Gabriel tells Muhammad that these women committed various offenses against their husbands. A beautiful lady at the door of heaven states that the women inside are much more beautiful than she. Muhammad has a key that opens Paradise. Here he sees all kinds of riches in the form of jewels and gold. The delicious fruits of many kinds are inexhaustible. In heaven are the humble women who did good to their husband.²⁷

(2) Stories about travel. One of the longest in the collection is titled "Story of Abdol Pabil." The summary below is also provided by Dr. McAmis:

(a) A wealthy man named Abraham died in Babel and his riches were divided among his three sons, Kabdar, Said and Pabil, and his daughters. Said took his inheritance and travelled abroad. In a typhoon his awang, boat, was lost and he was washed up on a strange shore. He got a job baking bread. Due to the quality of the bread he baked he came to the attention of the Queen and she offered Said the hand of her daughter in marriage. Through all these events Said continues to express his trust in God. Said married the daughter of the Queen of Peripiat and had many children.

(b) After Abdol Pabil was thrown out of the boat by his two brothers, Mansor and Naser, on their way to Missir, he was rescued by a giant bird who took him to a bright, high place where the bird changed into a beautiful woman who was the daughter of the Queen of Paradise. Abdol Pabil was offered all the jewels he wanted. When Abdol Pabil was returned to the boat by the giant bird, his two brothers were changed into dogs as a punishment for their evil deeds. The boat then arrived at Basara (Basra) where the merchants ridiculed the two brothers who had become dogs.²⁸

Another classification of folk tales which Dr. McAmis noted in his collection has to do with humor, and the example given — that of stories connected with Pilandok — leads us to the second volume

²⁷ Robert Day McAmis, *An Introduction to the Folk Tales of the Maranao Muslims of Mindanao*, (Univ. of Chicago: 1966), pp. 8-9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

published in 1966. I am referring to a collection already mentioned above, Abdullah T. Madale's volume on Maranao folk literature.²⁹ Prof. Madale records 10 Pilandok tales. The tales connected with Pilandok are scattered widely all over Asia, but ultimately these stories traced to their one and only source: the Sanskrit collection of beast fable, *Panchatantra*.

If we are to believe Prof. Madale and Dr. McAmis, there are hundreds of these tales around the villages in Lake Lanao. But the point here to remember is that many of these folk tales, as well as the *daranagan*, have Hindu influence as was brought out by Dr. Juan Francisco and Dr. Mamitua Sáber. The Pilandok tales are quite popular in Borneo. Pilandok in Malay means "mouse-deer," and from studies made by Dr. Francisco, and Prof. Tom Harrison of Sarawak — we can safely conclude that these tales came from a common stream in the migration of fables from their original Sanskrit and Hindi origin.³¹

III. Songs bayoks, and riddles among Muslims

We can briefly note here that the large body of songs called by the Maranaos as *bayok* still exist in Maranao society. A *bayok* may tell the story of a brave Maranao like that of the late Datu Sarawang of Tugaya (place where the Muslim brass artworks are made) who fought the Americans. Or it could tell about the deeds of a contemporary hero like that of Datu Tawantawan of Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur. Sometimes it tells about lovers like Prince Bantugan and Princes Manoyod. Thousands of these *bayoks* are still unrecorded.

Regarding riddles, not much of these literary artifacts have as yet been recorded. Perhaps the pioneer work made by Dr. Donn V. Hart on *Filipino Riddles* will contain samples from the Muslims. It is on the social values of proverbs that we can turn, and John M. Garvan's collection of *Sulu Proverbs* which appeared in *Philippine Magazine*

²⁹ Abdullah T. Madale, *A Preliminary Study of Maranao Folk Literature* (Institute of Research for Filipino Culture, Mindanao State Univ., Marawi City 1966) 183 pp. Multilith process.

³¹ Lu-un Ribu and Tom Harrison, "Agan Plandok, the Noble Mouse-Deer," *Sarawak Museum Journal*, vol. VII, (Dec. 1955), pp. 573-79. See also Dr. J. Francisco, *Indian Influence in the Philippines* (1963) and his "Some Philippine Tales compared with parallels in North Borneo," *Sarawak Museum Journal*, vol. X, nos. 19-20, 1962.

(1934) is just about the only systematic attempt to collect Muslim proverbs. The collection of Garvan has been largely incorporated by Dr. Damiana L. Eugenio in her monograph submitted to Dr. Wayland D. Hand, Director of Folklore Center, Comparative Folklore and Mythology, U.C. L.A. The work has been published by the University of the Philippines (1966).

Conclusion

I have started this brief paper on Muslim-Filipino literature with the belief that if ever our Muslim brothers in this part of the country will finally find solidarity with their Christian brothers — the initial steps towards understanding the culture of each, must come from us. Sometimes I am amazed at the kind of deep-rooted prejudice supposedly educated Christians have towards their less fortunate Muslim brothers. I have suggested in the early part of this paper that this understanding can be in terms of understanding what makes a Muslim weep, and laugh. Learning something about the arts and literature of this people may not solve the problem now raging in Cotabato and Lanao; it may not erase or eradicate centuries-old biases and prejudices — but surely, and this I can vouch for in my own personal experience — it will pave the way towards an ultimate understanding on our part of what the Muslims in our country represent. Dr. Cesar Adib Majul, Dean of University College, U.P., and our most distinguished Muslim scholar has made a statement worthy of our consideration:

*No solution to the problems of the Muslims in the Philippines can be permanent or even possible without taking into consideration, as a frame of reference, the principle that the Muslims in the Philippines have an older history than that of the other Filipinos or even that of the Filipino nation and that they are aware of this.*³²

³²Cesar Adib Majul, "The Muslims in the Philippines: A Historical Perspective," *Graphic*, June 9, 1971, pp. 21.