

MAGINDANAO FOLK LITERATURE: OBSERVATIONS OF ITS CHARACTERISTICS

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This paper intends to be praxis-oriented and will not present a broad theory, such as has been made by Dr. Samuel K. Tan in his paper, "The Development of Muslim Literature." It will only give a glimpse of a sector of Magindanao Oral Traditions and will not deal with other important publications on Magindanao Literature, as for example, "Analysis of Magindanao Riddles," by Rufa T. Cagoco-Guam, or "The Prophet of God Jesus," by myself. Allow me now to return to what was expressed above, relative to the past and present of Magindanao Folk Literature.

In the past, what absorbed most of our time were: first, the collection of a substantial part of the Magindanao Oral Traditions; next, the transcription of the materials from tape recordings; and lastly, the typing of these transcriptions into readable form. The research in the field, collecting the materials, took from January 1977 to July 1977. One full year was then devoted to transcribing 1239 cassettes. It took all of another year to prepare the typewritten form which amounted to about 24,000 pages. There are still some 3,000 pages to be added.

From the beginning, the project had been undertaken in the form of a consortium between Notre Dame University in Cotabato City and the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, with the support of the German Research Association and the National Research Council of the Philippines. Little would have been accomplished without the assistance of the Magindanao students at the Notre Dame University in Cotabato City; they did the actual collecting of the stories by going from village to village for this purpose with a small tape recorder in hand. Nothing would have been transcribed, either, if not for the assistants who gave away their hours after classes. They had many problems to overcome. They had to decipher wordings which were hard to understand or words which were too antiquated for them. The circumstances were also unfavorable because the havoc wrought by the earthquake in 1976 had created problems in finding working space.

The last major step, namely the typing, was carried out by three

typists, one a Christian and the other two, Magindanaons. While the typists were busy, further work was done in collecting riddles, proverbs, and also Magindanao manuscripts. Although these latter exist they were difficult to find and to borrow for copying. These handwritten manuscripts in Magindanao wordings were all written in Arabic letters, among which are "Qissas," "Tarsilas" and fortune-teller books. I have about fifty of these in my collection. A very recent collection of 220 songs and *bayuks* (metaphorical songs) were added to the materials on hand.

All the work so far served the purpose of collecting and preserving a substantial portion of Magindanao Oral Traditions. Keeping the materials safe has been accomplished to some extent by preparing four copies of them; they are to be found at Notre Dame University at Cotabato City and at the University of San Carlos in Cebu. This activity also involved the cataloguing of all the materials of the collection.

After I had sufficiently advanced in understanding Magindanao, some texts were already finalized in the vernacular. Also translations were made with the assistance of native informants. We were then ready for another stage, namely, evaluating and publishing particular texts. This stage, which we are in now, involve mainly songs, *bayuks*, folk epics and short stories, which exemplify four major types of Magindanao Oral Traditions.

Let us turn our attention to these selected kinds of traditions which are in the process of being finalized for publication. First among them is a series of stories called "Tudtul." These are short stories in prose form dealing with single, simple events. One of the first questions concerned the origin of the stories: were they Magindanao or non-Magindanao, or did they contain elements of both? Generally, three major sources could be identified and distinguished: there were traditions which had early contact with Hinduism and later with Islam which were outwardly Magindanao. However, it would be often difficult to determine exactly how far they are Magindanao. Only an extensive reading of all Magindanao Oral Traditions and a study of folk traditions of neighboring peoples will reveal the extent to which the materials, motifs, characteristics or features are to be attributed to one of the three major provenances.

We first encounter, for example, Hindu influence in the terminology being used which is either Indonesian-Malay (*ulubala, pilanduk, sansala, palamata*) or explicitly Sanskrit (*puteri, bityala*). As far as content is concerned, we discover Hindu terms in the field of mythology (*garuda, diwata*) and sociology (*rajah, menteri*). Sometimes we

encounter whole themes with a clear counterpart in the classical Malay literature (Si Delis, cf. Hikayat Bayan Budiman, Winstedt p. 76.), with roots in ancient Indian traditions.

Islamic-Arabic elements on the other hand show up primarily in the field of religion, for example in the use of terminology and the religious beliefs and practices contained in this terminology (*kitab, alamat, subcu, camal*). Although Hindu or Islamic influences were thus clearly identified as major influences from outside, they overlap, the degree of their occurrence differing from story to story. The obvious appearance of all stories is of course Magindanao. For example, they are Magindanao in the language, in reference to topographic environment, and in the use of local historical and cultural contexts. Further details of these general observations are given in our introductions to the individual stories. A deeper insight and more final statements, however, would only be gained after all 450 stories gathered so far have been studied.

Another and longer group of stories reach up to 300 pages each. Let us, for the time being, call these stories "novels." From summaries made, I learned that these novels develop around one major plot, the length of the novel depending on the re-occurrence of the plot within several generations of characters. Often these novels are composed by including various shorter stories.

Another kind of Tudtul showed up. I would call this group Folk Epics or Song Stories. While working on longer stories here and there the transcribers discovered passages which they they claimed to be *bayuks*, which hints at something poetical. I myself encountered on one occasion one of the longer Tudtuls, namely, "Rajah Madaya," which at first glance was similar to other Tudtuls but later proved to be one of the Magindanao Folk Epics.

I preferred to deal with these traditions predominantly from the point of view of anthropologists and folklorists, that is, as ethnoscience. I was not interested in imposing Western concepts and categories on these materials, but tried to understand and interpret them from their native perspective, or take into consideration at least how the Magindanaos characterize their oral traditions. Thus the story Rajah Madaya was accepted partially as a Tudtul, because the singer called it that.

I also made a number of other observations about this Tudtul. My first encounter with it was in a song-form recorded on several cassettes. The melody used was repeated over and again, which implied that this story was divided into stanzas. Further investigation revealed that these stanzas were divided into verses tending to be made up of eight syllables each. Thus we were confronted with the

fact that on one hand it was considered a *Tudtul* while on the other it was poetical. It was somewhat close to the Western concept of an epic although it did not strictly fulfill the conditions for an epic in content or form. I once proposed to call it a folk epic but decided to classify it as a song-story, that is, 'story' standing for its narrative character and 'song' for its poetical form.

Other categories of Magindanao Oral Traditions with which I have come into contact are the songs, *bayuks* and ballads. We will first address ourselves to the Magindanao songs. In 1981, late in March and early in April during a period of two weeks, I recorded about 170 of them at the radio station in Cotabato City. All of these have been translated and put into a simple metrical form and will be soon ready for publication. What only matters here now is gaining a certain overview concerning the character of these songs. For instance, it would be of special interest to know what makes them typically Magindanao; this question cannot be answered satisfactorily at the moment. Still, in general, it holds true that these songs are simple, in form and content --- except that they do not look quite like folk songs in Western countries.

Regarding their form the songs are made up of unrhymed verses and tend to consist mostly of a single stanza. There are various means applied to bring them into special poetical form, e.g., the last word of the foregoing verse, will become the first one in the following verse, or there is parallelism of verses 1 & 2 with 3 & 4. There is also the use of refrains, particularly in the lullabies. Content-wise the songs are about various situations of life but most often they focus on love. They involve, on the whole, a wide range of functions in the culture. There are lullabies, vendors' songs, freedom songs, songs of hunting, of war, courtship, marriage, disengagements, songs of derision, religious songs and even nonsense songs or those in which the words have no apparent meaning. Although the last word cannot be spoken of as to the specific character of Magindanao songs, the listeners or readers will have an intuitive grasp of it whenever they hear such songs. Allow me to present a few samples for this purpose. I am sure you will be delighted as much as I am with these Magindanao songs. (Refer to Annex I.)

In contrast to these ordinary songs is another category of songs, namely, the *bayuks*, of which about fifty have been translated and will also soon be ready for publication. *Bayuks* are songs composed in metaphorical speech and are, according to native informants, used when something unpleasant has to be told, which should not hurt the feeling of the one addressed, or when a cautious way of express-

ing one's self is advisable as in the case of courtship. The contents most often deal with love relationships, particularly when the love relationship is in danger of breaking up. At times they are used for giving religious advice relative to moral or ethical values. Regarding the form two types can be distinguished, those consisting of one stanza which are probably the older ones, and the more sophisticated consisting of two or more stanzas. (Refer to Annex II.)

In spite of the great value of the *bayuks* it is somewhat regrettable that they are no longer favored and in many instances not even known to the younger generation. Publication of these *bayuks* is intended to preserve and allow for further development of this art.

The last category with which I am somewhat more familiar thus far is what Westerners would call ballads. We find among the Magindanaons a certain kind of ballad. In my collection of Magindanao Oral Traditions, we have some short ballads among the songs as well as some long compositions. A ballad, we understand, is a song which basically tells a story. The Magindanaon form generally fulfills this simple definition. But Magindanaos still have their own ways of developing the story. Of the few ballads I have collected, I noticed at least the following peculiarities:

1. they repeat at times the refrain after every verse; or
2. they may include *bayuks*, thus giving the ballad, in this way, a strong lyrical bent; and
3. their ballads are of varied length involving at times up to 100 stanzas.

I have for the moment not been able to determine the real range of content of Magindanao ballads since only few have been gathered which deal with love affairs. Allow me to present to you one example of a Magindanao ballad. (Refer to Annex III.)

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ANNEX I

56 Pebpaigu

Ímanga wata, nangá wata

Endái di 'bpapaigu,
'a gkuan sa kaluma

'a uán sa panugangan.

56 Bathing together

Oh children, oh you children
there,
Whoever does not take a bath,
his wife will once be snatched
away,
and this holds true for his in-laws.

22 Nan den si Tungangilu

Nan den si Tungangilu,
bpangilai sa pasailu.
A ya tig 'u balai nin:
San ta den ba magedá.
Di ta san magedá.
Panumpangan ta nilan
itik, manuk, patyugal,
pbalalagui sa pawás!

22 Elopement

See, Tungangilu comes,
looks for a passenger
His sweetheart said (to him):
Let's take a ride on this -
We won't embark on this,
for chickens, ducks and geese
will ride that boat with us
and stray into the marsh.

29 Ludus ka

Ludus ka san, kinán 'in
sa manga bubun lisen 'in
endu magán gkaselá.
Pamamusugi nu bu
tangila nin, mata nin,
ka 'ndu pegkakasebur
i manga buk 'in
endu pegkakalendú

29 May he grow

Go down, go down, oh food,
to fill his thighs and legs
that they may grow the more
Go up to ears and eyes
that they will all grow stout
And may you visit too
each of his many hairs
and make their length increase

66 Pamugún

Pamugún, Pamugún, egka-
gutem aku.

66 Sparrow

Sparrow, sparrow, I am hungry

Egkagutem ka bun, da di
ka bpanegkau.
Manegkáu aku, na seledén
ako
Seledén ka bun, ka di ka
malague.
Malaguí aku, na timbaken
aku
Timbaken ka bun, ka di ka
magená.
Magená aku, na kayaten aku
mamusug

Mamausug aku, na sugkalen aku
Sungkalen ka bun, ka di ka
pedtibpu
Temibpú aku, na malepú aku.

Malepú ka bun, ka di ka
mapagud.
Mapagud aku, na masigkem
aku
Masigkem ka bun, ka di ka
bpeledtu.
Lemedtú aku, na sayaben aku

Sayabén ka bun, ka di ka de-
demudsuk.
Demudsuk aku, na litagán aku
Litagán ka bun, u di ka peb-
patai.

You will starve, for you don't
steal
If I will steal, I will be chased
You'll be chased, if you don't
run.
If I will run, I will be
shot.
You'll be shot, if you
don't hide.
If I will hide, I will
be scratched.
You will be scratched,
if, you don't climb.
If I will climb, I will
be polked.
You'll be polked, if you
don't jump.
If I will jump, I will be
sprained.
You will be sprained,
if not massaged.
If I'm massaged, I may
be caught
You'll be caught, if
you don't fly.
If I will fly, I'll be
swooped on.
You'll be swooped, if you
don't land.
If I will land, I will
be trapped.
You'll be trapped, if you
won't die.

ANNEX II

48 Salangkunai a meling

Salangkunai a meling
A malidu bpagimanen,
ka mulaun sa di benal
Dun-dun ai lumaging
A paya pagilemuan
ka mumbus sa hakadulat
Na u saken i dumanding

48. Untrue Leaves

Talking Salangkunai
T'is hard to trust in you,
For untrue leaves could sprout
Dun-dun fond of chatting
T' is hard believing you
For cheating buds may show
Once I (start to) fondle

sa kaludán pun na isá
na matag aku 'ngka manég
di ku mawatang galing.

3.9

Kanugun nu baliákat
a midsingáni dumulung
ka'u dagandal sa Udtuan.
Su di bun bpakadulún
Ka da pyd 'in lun pebpikil.

Duan nu bpaneláng-teláng
a pedsikáp pedsapali,
sa lugung sa kakayaṅgán.
Su di bu pakasapali
ka da ped 'in lun bpagitung.

2.20 Di akú bu mikupúl

Samalanún malanún
na samalanún akú bu
sa tulúgan a gambayan.
Na kálu adén su manik,
na pangenjin ku a linau,
i di temalima sa manik,
ka u temalima sa manik,
na di ku bu tig samaya
i sagubái kami melág
ka'u lalan sa lantian,
ka bási akú mikupúl
ka u lalakáwan nu senang.

Na semalangkúnu akú
sa wálai a palamáta.
Na u adén endilundáng
na kún ku a malimanú,
i di tángkap a lemundáng,
ka u tángkap a lemundáng,
na di ku bu mambaliba
i isá kami lemímbai
sa isúng sa katampálan,
ka makadtakábul akú,
ka'u limbáyan nu alúngan.

There on another see
You would just hear from me,
My darling, close to me.

Ambitious

What a loss for "Fond of inviting"
Who was hoping to speak
To the one on high.
But she cannot talk
Because there is no one to share
her thoughts.

What a pity "the one who hopes",
Who was struggling to get hold of
The thunderer on high.
She cannot get hold of
Because there is no one to share
her thoughts.

Challenged

Showing affection
I only show affection
In the palace of (my) light
If someone (else) will come
upstairs,
I'll ask politely
No permit be given to come up.
For if she would permit it
I cannot promise
We would walk side by side
Out into the open,
For I might feel challenged
Whilst on the travelling path of
the sun.

I will give attention
In the house of (my) jewel.
If someone (else) desires to stay,
Then I ask earnestly
No permit be given to stay,
For if she would permit to stay,
Then I won't affirm
We would walk as one
Out into the open,
For I might be provoked
During the passing of the sun.

ANNEX III

Mandeganby **Maludtem Kambali**

- 1 "Oh Mandegan, Mandegan,
Please catch the horse.
Please catch the horse,
For Mangelen will travel.
Mangelen will travel
To lovely lady Ligalen!"
- 2 "Oh Mangelen, Mangelen,
There is no need to catch it,
For it's already saddled.
Kawatil Mantang sa Ig
Is already saddled."
- 3 "Oh Mandegan, Mandegan,
You thus put the saddle
On Lidu Bimban Ganatan!"
- 4 "Oh Mangelen, Mangelen,
Lidu Bimban Ganatan
Is now saddled.
- 5 The name of its saddle
Is Bantulinai from the mountain
And Banati from the hill.
- 6 The name of its reins
Is 'twisted beautifully'
And 'made beautifully into a rope'.
- 7 The name of its stirrup
Is 'balancing the one tilting'
And 'outrigger of one crushed'
- 8 The name of its tail
Is 'a whisk for swaying'
And 'the fan of the ladies'.
- 9 The name of its ears
Is 'fan of a lady'
And 'fan of women'.

- 10 The name of its eyes
Is 'mirror from China',
But we can't use it as a mirror,
For it might mislead us.
- 11 It is only a temporary mirror
And we can't use it as a mirror,
For it gives always a wrong image.
- 12 The name of its testes
Is 'cover for the anus'
Is 'the cover of the backside'
- 13 Forgive, forgive.
Forgive the one, who hears (me)
And pardon (me) who listens
- 14 The name of its organ
Is 'file for the interior,
Which will clean the interior'."
- "Oh Mandegan, Mandegan,
You bring it there, Mandegan,
To the stair of the one who was resentful
And the steps of the one who bore a grudge!"
- 16 Then mounting on a horse
Was bachelor Mangelen
And he let it trot.
There he stopped and sat
In front of Ligalen.
- 17 What Ligalen said was:
"Oh aunt, oh aunt,
Please drive away the person!"
For it was as if he were sitting
In front of Ligalen
- 18 What Mangelen said was:
"Oh Ligalen, Ligalen,
I just do not move
If I cannot chew a quid,
If I can't chew
A quid of Ligalen,
Which was given to a mouth
And put on a pointing finger."

- 19 What her aunt said was:
"Oh Mangelen, Mangelen,
Truly, you can't chew a quid,
For we have no betel leaves.
We have a betel leaf,
But it is newly climbing a Katurai-tree.
- 20 Truly, you can't chew a quid,
For we have no betel-nut.
We have betel-nut,
But it was newly planted
- 21 Truly you can't chew a quid,
For we have no tobacco.
We have tobacco,
But it is newly germinating.
- 22 Truly, you can't chew a quid,
For we have no lime.
We have lime,
But it will be sailed to the interior
And will be rowed to Dikarikan."
- 23 Regarding Mangelen,
He returned without asking permission
And went home without saying goodbye.
- 24 Upon his arrival
He said to his aunt:
"Oh, aunt, oh aunt,
What kind of people are they!
They didn't offer me a quid.
- 25 They said:
"Oh Mangelen, Mangelen,
You cannot chew a quid,
For we don't have a betel-leaf.
We have a betel-leaf,
But it is newly climbing on a Katurai-tree etc.

92 Mandégan
by M. Kambali

1. U Mandégan, Mandégan,
na sigkem ka pan sa kuda.
Sigkem ka pan sa kuda,
ka lumalag si Mangelén.
Lumalag si Mangelén
sa bagutaú a Ligálen.

2. U Mangelén, Mangelén,
na di den musí sigkemén,
ka napasad den dsiya
napasad den dsiya
su kawatil Mantang sa Ig.

3. U Mandégan, Mandégan,
na nia ka pan dsiyái
su Lidu Bimban Ganatán.

4. U Mangelén, Mangelén,
na napasad den dsiya
su Lidu Bimban Ganatán.

5. Nia ngala nu siya nin
na bantulinái sa palau
na banati sa bukulud.

6. Ya ngala nu kakang 'in,
na binalibís a ulai,
a tinali-tali ulai.

7. Ya ngala nu tilibu,
'a panimbang 'u madingi,
'a katig u makalundáng.

8. Ya ngala nu ikug 'in,
na ambel-ambel sa sugud,
'a ambel 'u manga laga.

9. Ya ngala nu tangila,
na apil-apil 'u laga,
na apil 'u manga babái.

10. Ya ngala nu mata nin,
na pagalúngan a Sina,

na di ta kapagalungan,
ka matutú bu dumulat.

11. Legawán bu gagalú,
a di ta kalegawánan,
ka tatap bu maniúba.
12. Ya ngala nu butu nin,
na dapéng dapéng sa pudit.
na dapéng sa kulubungan
13. Tabia bu tabía,
na tabia sa pakañég
ampun sa pakakineg
14. 'A ya ngalan nu udúan nin
na galugádi sa lusud,
a panilak sa didalem.
15. U Mandégan, Mandégan,
na iampil 'engka Mandégan
k'u panikan nu nagusul
'pakat 'u namulegá.
16. Na kinasayau sa kuda
ni kanákan a Mangelén
ka napapagidu-idu,
'a san bun midtaman mayan
k u sumbawán ni Ligalen.
17. Ya kun tigi Ligalen i
u babu, u babu,
na pamúgau ka pan sa tau,
ka ma' kun su mayan i
sumbawán ni Ligálen.
18. Ya kun tigi Mangelén,
i u Ligálen, Ligálen,
na di aku matag mawa,
u di aku makambama,
di aku makambama
sa inapugan ni Ligálen,
a tinapenai sa ngali,
linulut sa tindulu.
19. Ya kun tig'i babu nin

u Mangelén, Mangelén
na di ka man makambama,
ka dala su namat 'ami.
Adén bun namat 'ami,
'a babaú pan pegkapet sa tudi.

20. Di ka bun makambama,
ka dala su mamán nami.
Aden bun maman nami
na bagú bagú pan pinamula.
21. Di ka bun makambama,
ka dala su tabaku na'i,
Aden bun tabaku na'i,
na babagú pan bpeleti.
22. Di ka bun makambama,
ka dala su apug 'ami.
Adén bun apug 'ami,
'a layagen pan sa sugud,
a pulan sa Dikarikan.
23. Amaika si Mangelén,
a minuli da pagetau.
'a minakau da den udas.
24. Endau i kinauma nin,
na ya nin pidtalú ka'i babu nin,
na u babu, u babu,
na ngin a manga tau i 'ntu,
Da aku nilan pambama,
25. ka ya nilan pindaging,
na u Mangelén, Mangelén,
na di ka pan makambama,
ka dala su namat 'ami.
Ka Adén bun namat 'ami,
'a babagú pan pegkapet sa tudi.