

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.

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### 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 egkevangen se lipetuan ini./ Medwaleng se lipetuan ne medtegenes./ 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.

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