

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

Notes Towards A History of Pampangan Literature

Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz

Philippine Studies vol. 24, no. 1 (1976) 64–98

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Notes Towards A History of Pampangan Literature

EDNA ZAPANTA-MANLAPAZ

It is premature to attempt writing a history of Pampangan¹ literature because very little research has been done on the subject. At best, the present article is a compilation of miscellaneous notes relating to Pampangan literature. Most of these notes were gathered from the relatively few primary and secondary materials that are currently available; these were supplemented by notes gathered during interviews with some Pampangan writers² and readers. Having been pieced together from these notes, the present article is admittedly uneven in its treatment of the subject, relative to the amount of information available on a given topic. For the same reason, the scope of this article excludes three large areas of Pampangan literature: oral or folk literature, religious literature, and journalism.

The pre-Spanish literature of the Pampangans survives exclusively in its folklore, which is both interesting and extensive. Most data regarding Pampangan folk literature are found in the ethnographic studies of the Pampangans. Set 5 of H. Otley Beyer's "Philippine Ethnographic Series" consists of 120 original papers on Pampangan folklore, social customs and beliefs.³ These are

1. As there do not appear to be any strict rules governing their use, I have preferred the descriptive term "Pampangan" to the equivalent terms "Kapampangan" and "Pampango." In terms of orthography, I have chosen to use the "new" orthography, i.e., that prescribed by the Institute of National Language, except when quoting from works written in the old orthography. In 1946, a prominent Pampangan writer, Zoilo Hilario, who was a member of the Institute of National Language, proposed the adoption of the "new" orthography (Hilario, "Tuntunan King Pamisulatmap," *Bayung Sunis* [mimeoscript, 1962], pp. 6-14). His proposal was supported by a few writers but failed to gain popular support.

2. I am specially indebted to Mr. Eusebio Cunanan and Mr. Amado Yuzon, who were my principal sources for much of the information contained in this article.

3. Unfortunately, only one (Vol. 1) of the three volumes comprising Set 5 is available in the Philippines. The sole volume is at the University of the Philippines Library, a microfilm copy of the partial set at Harvard University.

papers by students, most of them written between 1918–25. As expected, these papers tend to merely repeat one another but together, yield much valuable information. The other major source of data is Ricardo C. Galang's "Ethnographic Study of the Pampangans."⁴ Galang's study has a highly informative section on Pampangan folklore but is sadly deficient in documentation. Supplementary materials are provided by the following studies, all of them masteral theses: Eufrocina Tinio, "Pampango Proverbs" (Far Eastern University, 1953); Alejandrino Perez, "Pampango Folklore" (University of Santo Tomas, 1968); Luz Pelayo, "Pampango Folksongs: their Cultural Significance" (Angeles University, 1971).

Like those of other vernaculars, the early printed literature of the Pampangans consisted largely of religious writings which took the form of catechisms, the life of Christ and those of the saints, and devotional exercises. At the beginning, these were limited to mere translations of Spanish works. In time, however, Pampangan writers ventured to write original works of the same kind, though these remained subject to ecclesiastical censorship. Religious writings later found logical extension in moralistic treatises which ranged from apologetics to guide-books for right manners and good conduct, the latter often following the spirit, if not the letter, of Modesto de Castro's *Urbana at Feliza*.

Pampangan journalism exhibited much vigor during the first several decades of the present century. It has been estimated that since 1906,⁵ there have appeared more than thirty newspapers and periodicals.⁶ The fact that these served as publication outlets for Pampangan writers makes them indispensable sources of Pampangan literature. Unfortunately, only a fraction of these periodicals have remained extant.

4. Ricardo C. Galang, "Ethnographic Study of the Pampangans" (unpublished typescript, 1940).

5. The year 1906 marked the publication of the first Pampangan newspaper, the bilingual weekly, *Ing Emañgubiran – El Imparcial*.

6. This estimate was given by Eusebio Cunanan, who contributed to and edited several of these periodicals.

I. DRAMA

ANTECEDENTS OF THE DRAMA

Insofar as they involve various degrees of mimesis, the *bulaklakan*, the *karagatan* and perhaps even the *potei* may be considered the antecedents of secular Pampangan drama. The *potei* is the Pampangan counterpart of the Tagalog *carillo*, a type of shadow play which consists of manipulating wooden puppets against a lighted backdrop. The performance may either be silent or accompanied by dialogue.⁷ Like other provincial folk, the Pampangans whiled away the time during funeral wakes by staging poetical contests. The two most popular forms of these were the *bulaklakan* and the *karagatan*. The *bulaklakan*, like the Tagalog *duplo*, is a game involving two groups as participants, one group consisting of young women named after flowers and the other of young men named after trees. The game is presided over by a king who sits at the head of a table. The king opens the game by announcing that his pet butterfly has flown:

Uling quening culungan cu
Cabud nia mewala cacu
Ing mariposang sese cu
Nuya caya mo tinuru?

Sinulapong sari catas
Babatiawan queng tinacas
Carin ya lipalapacpac
Caring sanga na ning Biabas.⁸

My pet butterfly
has suddenly escaped
from its cage.
Where has it flown?

I saw it flying high
as it escaped,
playfully fluttering its wings
as it hovered above the branch of the
guava tree.

The young man playing the role of the *biabas* (guava) tree protests that the butterfly merely fluttered past and had perched instead on the rosál bush. The young woman playing the role of the rosál bush makes up a similar story and points at another participant. The game proceeds by having the participants point to one another in turn, all the while reciting in octosyllabic verse. In the event one of the participants is unable to defend himself satisfactorily, that person is required to hand in a *prenda* (token) in the form of a handkerchief, a ring, a walking stick, etc., which may be redeemed only at the game's end by performing some penance, e.g., reciting a prayer, singing a song. Although an effort is made to give the impression of

7. Juan S. Aguas, *Juan Crisostomo Soto and Pampangan Drama* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1963), p. 8.

8. These stanzas are taken from Ros en Val, *Bulaklakan* (Manila: Aklatang Lunas, 1955).

extemporaneity, the participants were likely to have memorized their versified responses from handbooks prepared for that purpose.

Even more popular than the bulaklakan was the *karagatan*. There are several versions of the *karagatan* but they invariably involve two participants, one of whom is upstairs and one of whom is downstairs. They are known as the *poderdante* and the *suplicante* respectively. Although again, efforts are made to give the impression of extemporaneity, the participants in fact follow a set scenario.⁹ In this case, the *suplicante* poses as a passerby seeking admittance into the house where the wake is being held.

Acu qñg bili cu carin sa mamapus
quetang mituburan sinun at dinirup,
mal mung pacalulu cacu mu ilingus
marañgal a Aring queti pin sasacup.

Assuming the role
of someone sent here,
I humbly beg you,
O king, to receive me.

The *poderdante* instructs the other guests to bar the door until he has questioned the *suplicante*.

Iliquid yeng eran, icabat yeng pasbul,
e co mañgabala cutnan queng maratun,
qñg bacung austa ing nasa na't payul
nining SUPLICANTENG migsarya at sinun.

Bolt the door
and remain quiet,
while I question him
on the purpose of his visit.

He then begins to interrogate the *suplicante*:

Ninu pu icayu, nu co pu menibat,
insang balayan yung tucnañgan a tapat,
atin cong cedula, pila'na co edad,

Who are you, sir? Where are you from?
Have you a residence certificate?
How old are you? What is your
occupation?

nanung OFICUI YU, palayo at bansag.

What is your nickname and your name?

The *suplicante* chides the *poderdante* for requiring so much information but the latter replies that an honorable man would not hesitate to identify himself. The *suplicante* promises to identify himself but repeats his request for permission to ascend the stairs, on the grounds that the *poderdante* cannot expect to see the latter's *cedula* (residence certificate) in the dark outside the house. The *poderdante* grants his request and the *suplicante* proceeds to climb the stairway, ascending one step upon the recitation of one stanza. The *suplicante* improvises these verses depending on the number of steps, e.g., if there are seven steps, he may recite stanzas relating to the seven sacraments. Once he gains entry into the sala, he requests permission to join the game in progress, usually either a *bugtungan* (a game of riddles) or a *bulaklakan*.

9. The complete script of the *karagatan* from which the following excerpts were taken is provided in Chapter 10 of Felix Galura, *Ing Cabiguan* (Bacolor: Imprenta y Encuadernacion de Manuel Galura, 1915), pp. 45–55.

In another version,¹⁰ the suplicante is permitted to ascend the stairway only by satisfactorily answering all the questions and solving all the problems presented to him by the poderdante. The questions generally involve folk or biblical stories, e.g., how many children did Abraham have? how many steps did the ladder of Jacob have? where are the four nails used in the crucifixion of Christ? Once the suplicante gains admission to the sala, he is permitted to single out from among the young ladies present the one whose favor he would like to win. He signifies his intention by throwing her a knotted handkerchief. If the lady in question is willing to entertain his suit, she recites the "Our Father" and then proceeds to test him by posing a series of questions, all of which the suplicante must answer to her satisfaction. The entire dialogue is conducted in verse, some of which may be extemporaneous but most of which has been memorized ahead of time.

THE KUMIDYA

What was known to the Tagalogs as the *comedia* or the *moro-moro* was known to the Pampangans as the *kumidya*. The most famous Pampangan kumidya is a work entitled *Comedia Heroica de la Conquista de Granada o sea Vida de Don Gonzalo de Cordoba, llamado el Gran Capitan* by Padre Anselmo Jorge de Fajardo.¹¹ Padre Fajardo (1785–1845) was born in Bacolor of a well-to-do family that sent him to the University of Santo Tomas for theological studies. Sometime in the early decades of the nineteenth century, he reportedly travelled to Spain. It was during his travels to Cordoba, Toledo, and Granada that he presumably was inspired to write a kumidya revolving around the heroic figure of Don Gonzalo de Cordoba.¹²

The historical Gonzalo de Cordoba (1453–1515) was a general in the service of Queen Isabella, and was among those responsible for the recovery of Granada from its seven-century occupation by the Moors. Though Gonzalo's military exploits appeared tailor-made for fitting within the pattern of the kumidya, alterations

10. Aguas, *Juan Crisostomo Soto*, pp. 5–7.

11. Anselmo Jorge Fajardo, *Comedia Heroica de la Conquista de Granada o Sea Vida de Don Gonzalo de Cordoba llamado el Gran Capitan* (Bacolor: Imprenta de Cornelio A. Pabalan Byron, 1912).

12. Amado Yuzon, "Poems by Filipino Heroes: Bukaneg to Palma" (unpublished typescript, 1954).

had to be made on his amorous conquests; hence, Fajardo's inclusion of Gonzalo's fictional romance with the beautiful Moorish princess, Zulema. Of this inter-weaving of historical and fictional threads was spun the tapestry of Gonzalo de Cordoba's fame as a folkhero.

Like others of its kind, *Gonzalo de Cordoba* has an extremely intricate plot. During an invasion of a Moslem city, Gonzalo falls in love at first sight with the Moorish princess, Zulema. However, nothing comes of that first encounter because Gonzalo is sent on another mission, this time to Africa. During Gonzalo's absence from the Christian camp, a letter arrives. It is addressed to Gonzalo by Zulema and her sister-in-law, Queen Zoraida. The latter, who has been falsely accused of plotting the murder of her husband, the despotic Boabdil, begs Gonzalo to come to her defense. On behalf of the absent Gonzalo, the Conde de Lara goes to Granada and saves both the Queen's life and her honor. Meanwhile, Zulema is abducted by Alamar and taken prisoner on a ship bound for Africa. Gonzalo, who is on his way back to Spain disguised as a Moor, rescues Zulema. The two lovers anchor at Malaga where Zulema nurses the wounded Gonzalo whom she knows only as the African Knight. Learning of his daughter's rescue, Mulay Hassem promises Zulema's hand to whoever of her four suitors — one of them being the African Knight — can capture Gonzalo. When Gonzalo reveals his true identity to her, Zulema nevertheless assures him of her love. Gonzalo surprises his rivals by revealing his identity to them, and then easily defeats them in combat. In the meantime, the news of Gonzalo's impending arrival in Granada causes panic among the inhabitants. Almanzor, the brother of Zulema, challenges Gonzalo to personal combat. Without Gonzalo's knowledge, Queen Isabella accepts the challenge. Gonzalo thus finds himself caught between his loyalty to the Queen and his love for Zulema. When Gonzalo fails to arrive on time, the Conde de Lara puts on Gonzalo's armor and in the course of combat, kills Almanzor. When Gonzalo rushes to Zulema to explain what had happened, he is captured by Boabdil's men and sentenced to death. When the wounded Conde de Lara hears this, he confesses that it was he who was responsible for Almanzor's death. Refusing to have his friend sacrifice his life for him, Gonzalo insists that it was really he who was guilty. The matter is settled when the Conde de Lara exhibits the wounds he received during that fateful

combat. Muley Hassem is so moved by the friendship between the two men that he releases them both. Boabdil is angered by this and imprisons his father and his sister. In response to Zulema's plea for help, Gonzalo invades Granada. On behalf of Spain, he claims the city of Granada and on his own behalf, claims the hand of Zulema.

Fajardo's work is only one of many similarly romanticized accounts of Gonzalo de Cordoba's life. As a matter of fact, its plot bears resemblance to that of Tagalog *corrido* on the same subject.¹³ What distinguishes Fajardo's version from other works of the same kind, however, is its epic proportions. In terms of length, it has no equal in Filipino literature. It is a three-volume work consisting of 832 pages and of 31,000 lines. The three volumes correspond to its formal division into three *jornados* (day's journeys). In point of fact, the only time it was known to have been staged — in Bacolor on February 1831¹⁴ — the performance took not three nights but seven. (Tradition has it that during that phenomenal presentation, all the livestock in that town had to be killed in order to feed the audience who had come from all the neighboring towns.) In terms of scope, the kumidya appears to run the entire gamut of human experience; not surprisingly, the poet-priest Fajardo took advantage of this wide range of topics to moralize on all aspects of human experiences. The work thus became a veritable treasury of maxims, both spiritual and secular, from which generations of Pampangans delighted to quote. (The story is told that when Juan Crisostomo Soto and other Pampangan writers were imprisoned for their revolutionary activities, they would entertain and comfort one another by reciting lines from this kumidya.)

What appealed most perhaps to the Pampangans about *Gonzalo de Cordoba* was its lyrical manipulation of the Pampangan language. The richness of its vocabulary, the refinement of its rhetoric, its intricate turns of phrasing, all appealed to the ears of Pampangan audiences. Since, unfortunately, it is this aspect of the kumidya which lends itself least to translation, suffice it to say that the evaluation is best entrusted to the judgment of the native speakers.

13. Damiana Eugenio, "Awit and Korido: A Study of Fifty Philippine Metrical Romances in Relation to their Sources and Analogues" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1965), pp. 200–212. Only a close study of Fajardo's work will reveal to what extent he may have borrowed from these European works. There are also known to be Ilocano and Cebuano works based on the life of Gonzalo de Cordoba.

14. Cited by Cornelio A. Pabalan Byron in his foreword to *Gonzalo de Cordoba*.

That their evaluation of *Gonzalo de Cordoba* is extraordinarily high is evidenced by the fact that the Pampangans, by common consent, acknowledge Fajardo as the Father of Pampangan literature. All of the Pampangan writers that followed acknowledge themselves his beneficiaries.

The overwhelming popularity of *Gonzalo de Cordoba* is even more remarkable because it was performed only once and for a long time, circulated mainly in manuscript form. The only known edition of the work is that printed by Cornelio Pabalan Byron in Bacolor in 1912.¹⁵ In view of its widespread popularity and enduring influence, many Pampangans are inclined to regard it as a regional masterpiece. What *Florante at Laura* is to the Tagalogs, so is *Gonzalo de Cordoba* to the Pampangans. Amado Yuzon, a Pampangan poet, claims that "in literary value, *Gonzalo de Cordoba* will not rank less than any work by a Filipino writer, including Balagtas' *Florante at Laura*. The latter had the good fortune of having been written in a more widely circulated language; this accident explains the difference between the [reputations of the two works]."¹⁶ This statement may well be a partisan opinion, but it is a claim that should not be dismissed lightly and which at the very least should merit *Gonzalo de Cordoba* wider circulation and closer study than it has so far received.

There were other kumidyas, of course, but these seem lackluster in comparison with *Gonzalo de Cordoba*. Although kumidyas continued to find favor among the public, a growing minority of writers began to feel that it was time for Filipino literature to develop more realistic dramatic forms. Among the Tagalogs, the death knell for the comedia was sounded by Severino Reyes when he presented his ferocious parody, *R.I.P.*, in 1902. Among the Pampangans, that same death knell was echoed by Felix Galura (1866–1919) in his work, *Ing Cabiguan* ("Misfortune") in 1915.¹⁷ It is a long verse narrative that Galura wrote with the express purpose of awakening readers from the fitful stupor induced by the *kurirus* (corridos and awits) and the kumidyas.

15. A few sources claim that there was an earlier edition dated 1831, but there is no bibliographical evidence to support this claim. Pabalan makes no mention of an earlier edition in his foreword to the 1912 edition which he published.

16. Yuzon, "Poems by Filipino Heroes."

17. Felix Galura, *Ing Cabiguan* (Bacolor: Imprenta y Encuadernacion de Manuel Galura, 1915).

Ing bucud cung nais at diling pagduglan
ing megawing isip canacung padayan,
canyang panudtud ning malacac manyaman
qñg mali nang dase ning ENCANTO'T TAPANG.

My sole intention and only desire
/ is to awaken the mind / that is
fast asleep / on the mat of enchant-
ment and bravery.

The preliminary matter includes a versified Foreword by Pilo-pilo¹⁸ who wholeheartedly supports Galura in indicting the kumidya as a threat to the morals of the people.

At nanung ibie ning CUMIDYA qñg balen
ñgening ding taw na paua lang mayañgin,
qñg sabing palalu carin la miringuil
at pati babai, milalaco jinjin.

And what can the kumidya give to
the people / when its characters are
all conceited, / inclined to boasting, /
and even the women are vulgar?

Ing lalung mapait a maguing bunga na
ninsamang CUMIDYA ñgening milague ya,
ding quecatang anac pilit manalbe la
balac da maliari itang acaquit da.

The bitterest fruit / of any kumidya
being staged / is that our children,
who insist on seeing them, / are led
to believe that what they see on
stage is proper.

Inia nung dagul ya micatagun naman
at mag FIESTA ya barriu nang tucnañgan,
aguang magugu'la ding cualta nang simpan
CUMIDIANTIS yasa, e nana picabiang.

So when he grows up / and a fiesta
takes place in his barrio, / he longs
to become a *kumidyante*, / not caring
whether he spends all his savings.

Lalu't nung PRINCÍPI ing meguing tungcul na,
o EMBAJADOR yang tubud ning ARI na,
nuya man miarap papustu't MAGMARCHA
at qñg panasque na, balamu sira ya.

Especially if he has the role / of
either a prince or an ambassador, /
he stands and struts like them even
offstage, / thus behaving like a
madman.

Pagaralan na ing anyung magaslo
at pati buntuc na tutuqñg gagalo,
ing tutu nang pita ampon pang talindo
ing matungue ya sang metung a VASALLO.

He affects their pompous bearing, /
including the way they tilt their heads,
/ since his highest ambition / is
to be named a vassal.

Itng calaraman sucut nang icutcut
ibaldug guisanan qñg metung a saug,
ing amanu mu yang panambun matutus
ibilang tang gabun, ipanacap lubus.

This falsehood
should be dumped into a river,
or buried underneath
the earth of our literature.

Pilo-pilo concludes his Foreword by exhorting the readers to bury the kumidya.

The narrative proper is a commonplace love story that is not

18. Pilo-pilo is obviously a pseudonym, but the real identity of the writer is not known.

bound to the *kumidya* except by the loosest of ties: it is during the staging of a *kumidya* that the two lovers manage to slip out of the crowd and elope, escaping the watchful eyes of the girl's mother who is opposed to the marriage. However, in laying the background for the elopement, Galura takes the opportunity to make satirical thrusts at the *kumidya*. For instance, while watching the rehearsal of a *kumidya*, the narrator ridicules the incredibility of a princess fighting a lion and the absurdity of the prince and the princess conversing with the lion in Pampangan. But what is the reaction of the audience to all this absurdity, the narrator asks. Instead of looking on with disapproval, the audience are held spellbound.

Catulayo ane qñg pustu't caransa
ati coñgan maili ampon paca-ñgaña.

How entertained you are by the spectacle,
laughing as you watch in open-mouthed
delight.

No sooner have the prince and the princess vanquished the lion than the prince declares undying love for the princess. Galura points out the impropriety of his declaration of love since neither the place nor the time allow the princess any real choice. Galura expresses the fear that the prince's bad example may have a dangerous effect on the young people in the audience.

Inya ding aliwa caring baintaw
qñg maroc a landas carin la tutungu,
uli ning iquit da caretang CURIRU
a caring cumidyang alang pun at sepu.

That is why some young men / are led
astray, / because of the nonsense they
read in the *kurirus* / and see in the
kumidyas.

Tuquian do qñg dalan detan paglolon da
sacara ipasyag ing carelang sinta,
warit e la tangap, iya na ing daptan da
ing masimbalang la quetang queinan da.

They follow the young women along
the streets / and there, declare their vows
of love; / when they are turned down, /
they take advantage of the women's
weakness.

Ding bigung dalaga muli nong tatangis
caring pengari ra tambing dang pagsuli't,
itang mepalyaring carela mirasig,
a tune nang buña ning butang a isip.

The poor girls return home crying, /
reporting to their parents / what befell
them / as a result of the *kumidyas*'
harmful influence.

.....
E miliban oras tana ne daracpan
ning metung a Pulis ing memasimbalang,
uli ning dehum deng dinapat manawang
qñg bayang magdusa queta qñg suculan.¹⁹

.....
Within a few hours, a policeman
comes to arrest the culprit,
who is sued
and promptly jailed.

19. To reenforce his point, Galura appended to the verse narrative a brief essay explaining Penal Code 446, which prosecutes those who elope with minors.

Ing Cabiguan went through two editions. The first edition of 500 copies, printed on 22 October 1915, was sold out in a week. A second edition of 1,000 copies was issued on 10 November 1915.²⁰ These figures, impressive even by contemporary standards, attest to the popularity but not necessarily to the effectiveness of the work. In point of fact, by the time that Galura published *Ing Cabiguan* in 1915, the battle against the kumidya had already been half won by Mariano Proceso Pabalan and the *zarzuelistas* who came after him.

THE ZARZUELA

Theatre history informs us that the Spanish zarzuela was introduced on the Filipino stage in 1879. During the following two decades, various Filipino playwrights tried their hand at the writing and staging of zarzuelas, all the while retaining its purely Spanish form; that is to say, the themes, the characters, and the music were as in the Spanish plays, while the dialogue continued to be in Spanish. In 1900, the zarzuela underwent Filipinization at the hands of Mariano Proceso Pabalan Byron (1862–1904) who ventured to write a zarzuela in the vernacular.²¹ When he first announced his plans of writing a zarzuela in Pampangan, his critics claimed that the language would not lend itself well to musical rendition. To this objection, Pabalan was reported to have answered: “Wa, m’ayumu’t malambut ing sabing Castila, masias at maslam ing talagang sabi tamu, inta ing Castila na wari ya mu cabud ing malyaring magpang qñg musica? – Ing Italiano, ing Frances, ing Ingles, ing Aleman, masias mu naman uling e Castila, at e macayagpang qñg musica?”²² (“Yes, the Spanish language is sweet and soft and our own is hard and sour, but is Spanish the only language that can be set to music? Italian, French, English, German – they are not Spanish, but are they not set to music?”) He then proceeded to write *Ing Managpe* (“The Spotted Dog”),²³

20. Galura, “Capasalamatan,” *Ing Cabiguan*.

21. Ely V. Javillonar, “The Significance of Mariano Proceso Pabalan in Capampangan Dramatic Literature,” (M.A. thesis, University of the Philippines, 1961).

22. Quoted by Felix Galura in his foreword to Mariano Proceso Pabalan, [*Ing*] *Managpe* (Baculud: Limbagan nang Cornelio A. Pabalan Byron, 1909).

23. The original manuscript of *Ing Managpe* has fortunately been preserved and remains in the possession of the Pabalan family. However, a microfilm copy of the original is available at the University of the Philippines Library.

the first vernacular zarzuela, which was premiered at the Teatro Sabina in Bacolor on 13 September 1900.

Nor was the singularity of *Ing Managpe* restricted to its use of the vernacular; it effected another vital change in the zarzuela by introducing a new theme: the Filipino family.

The story lines of the zarzuelas up to that time, whether written by Spaniards or Filipinos, were Spanish. What drew Filipino audiences to them was not so much the action as the colorful costumes and scenery, the handsome actors and pretty swooning actresses. All this was changed by Pabalan's *Ing Managpe*. Thereafter, the Philippine zarzuela had only one dominant theme: the Filipino family. There were infinite variations . . . but always within the framework of family life.²⁴

Ing Managpe is a one-act comedy built around a domestic quarrel. Doña Juana threatens to leave her husband, Don Diego, whom she suspects of playing around with other women. The situation is aggravated when she discovers a woman's handkerchief on the living-room sofa. To patch up the quarrel between her master and her mistress, the maid, Sianang, claims that the handkerchief is hers. At the same time, she offers her mistress a piece of advice: that the size of an object varies from small to large depending from which side of the lens you examine it. Doña Juana is appeased by the sound counsel and changes her mind about leaving. In the meantime, Don Diego returns home. Sianang, not wanting to be discovered alone in the room with the houseboy, Pablo, tells him to hide under the sofa. To allay her master's suspicions, Sianang claims that the dog, Managpe,²⁵ is responsible for the noises he hears coming from underneath the sofa. However, Pablo's mistimed sneeze reveals his hiding place. Doña Juana arrives to find her husband confronting the lovers. Don Diego upbraids Doña Juana for her jealousy, which he claims has caused her to neglect her duties as mistress of the house. Doña Juana apologizes for her past behaviour and they are happily reconciled.

The same year that the Compañia Sabina presented Pabalan's *Ing Managpe*, it presented a play, *Ing Paninap nang Don Roque* ("The Dream of Don Roque") by Juan Crisostomo Soto (1867–

24. Ely Javillonar-Marquez, "The First Vernacular Zarzuela," *Philippine Studies* 12 (April, 1964), 324.

25. "Managpe" literally means "patched." In Pampanga, it is a common name for spotted dogs.

1918).²⁶ Soto went on to write about fifty plays, steadily acquiring his reputation as Pampangan's greatest dramatist.²⁷ Among the most highly regarded of these are the following, each of which different critics have nominated as his masterpiece: *Sigalut* ("Trouble"), *Balayan at Sinta* ("Country and Love"), *Julio Agosto* ("July, August"), *Perla, Zafiro, Rubi* ("Pearl, Sapphire and Ruby") and *Ing Anac ning Katipunan* ("The Child of the Katipunan"). These are the critics' various choices; the people's unanimous choice is Soto's *Alang Dios!* ("There is no God!") which was first presented at Teatro Sabina on 16 November 1902. It has been staged many times since, most recently at the Cultural Center on 31 May 1975. It played to a packed house, drawing nostalgic sighs from the older members of the audience and attentive looks from the younger generation.

The plot of *Alang Dios!* is essentially that of a love story. Enrique, a poor painter, has just been released from prison for the alleged theft of a diamond crucifix belonging to Maria Luz, the daughter of the wealthy Don Andres. Upon his return to his hometown, he learns of the impending marriage between Ma. Luz, his sweetheart, and Ramon, the scion of a wealthy family. Angered by the apparent unfaithfulness of Maria Luz, he decides to leave town. A tearful Maria Luz pleads with him, saying that she had consented to the marriage only under pressure from Doña Cucang, her ambitious stepmother. Enrique refuses to believe her and Maria Luz is forced to proceed with the wedding. Meanwhile, her maid, Clara, suffers remorse of conscience and confesses the truth to Enrique. On the night of the alleged theft, she had seen Enrique leaving the house after a secret rendezvous with Maria Luz. Wishing to protect the reputation of her mistress, she stole the diamond crucifix to make it appear that Enrique was there as a thief rather than as a lover. Clara's confession, however, comes too late to prevent the marriage of Maria Luz and Ramon. A family friend,

26. E. Arsenio Manuel, "Juan Crisostomo Soto," *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, I (Quezon City: Filipiniana Publications, 1955), pp. 420-36. To this biographical account is appended a checklist of Soto's literary works.

27. Two studies have been written on Soto's dramatic works: Juan S. Aguas, "A Study of the Life of Juan Crisostomo Soto with Special Reference to *Alang Dios!*" (M.A. thesis, University of the Philippines, 1955). A condensed version of this thesis was later published under the title *Juan Crisostomo Soto and Pampangan Drama* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1963). The other study is Erlinda Geronimo, "A Critical Study of Crissot's Two Zarzuelas, *Perla, Zafiro't Rubi* and *Anac ning Katipunan!*" (M.A. thesis, Centro Escolar University, 1971).

Don Monico, succeeds in preventing the two men from fighting a duel by revealing to them that they are really half-brothers and that Maria Luz and Clara are also half-sisters. The brothers, now reconciled, return home to find that Maria Luz has died. They exclaim "There's no God!" but are reproved by Don Monico. Repentant, they affirm that there is, after all, a God who rewards the good and punishes the bad.

The enduring popularity of *Alang Dios!* owes less to its craftsmanship than to its grandiloquence. The most loved and most memorable portions of the play are the long soliloquies, the sheer eloquence of which remain unsurpassed in Pampangan drama.

The only contemporary of Soto's whose reputation rivals his is Aurelio Tolentino (1867-1915).²⁸ Like Soto, Tolentino was both a prolific and versatile writer. He is known to have produced some 69 literary pieces in various genres.²⁹ What is especially interesting about Tolentino and what makes his place secure in Filipino literature is that he wrote in three languages: Spanish and Tagalog as well as Pampangan. His Pampangan works number twenty-one and constitute approximately one third of his total output.

His first dramatic work was *La Venganza de Robdeil* ("The Revenge of Robdeil," 1891), a typical kumidya which he may have adapted from a Spanish work. However, Tolentino soon abandoned the kumidya in favor of other dramatic forms. Most of his plays are zarzuelas, ranging from light-hearted comedies to melodramatic tragedies. Two of the more interesting of these zarzuelas are *Damayan* ("Cooperation") and *Ing Poeta* ("The Poet"). *Damayan* (1911)³⁰ is a one-act zarzuela that is a highly entertaining, if curious, combination of nationalist propaganda and tomfoolery. *Damayan* chides Felipe (the Filipino) for patronizing the goods and services of Laura Ecalahi (Laura-the-Foreigner), to the disadvantage of his fellow Filipinos. Despite his resolution to the contrary, he is swindled anew by the wily Laura and her accomplice,

28. E. Arsenio Manuel, "Aurelio Tolentino," *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, II, pp. 371-432. A checklist of Tolentino's works is found in the appendix to this biography.

29. For a bibliography of Tolentino's extant works, see the appendix to *Aurelio Tolentino: Selected Writings*, ed. by Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Library, 1975). This anthology of eight works of Tolentino includes two Pampangan plays, *Damayan* and *Ing Poeta*. The book is prefaced by an introductory essay to Tolentino's literary works.

30. "Damayan," *Aurelio Tolentino: Selected Writings*, pp. 249-78.

Inocente Guiringpula. To escape his creditors and protect himself from further manipulation by Laura, he feigns insanity. One of his creditors, Menulu, refuses to believe the sham and lets the others in on his suspicion. Finally, Felipe is persuaded to admit the sham and all the parties are reconciled.

Ing Poeta (19__)³¹ is a comedy of errors, ingeniously staged by Augusto, a local poet, for the purpose of winning the hand of Maria. Maria's father, Don Pedro, has told Augusto that he would consent to the marriage only if the latter can come up with a zarzuela in time for staging during the coming fiesta. The resourceful Augusto decides to meet the challenge by setting the stage for a real-life comedy involving Don Pedro and the other townspeople. He sends separate anonymous notes to Don Cumeris and his wife, Calara, leading each of them to suspect that the other is having a clandestine affair. Each disguises himself as the other and so disguised, meets the suspected lover at the designated place of rendezvous. The confrontation that follows is a merry mix-up. At the height of the confusion, Augusto appears and tells the townspeople that, without their knowledge, they had been made to play roles in a real-life zarzuela. Don Pedro is impressed by Augusto's resourcefulness and promises him Maria's hand in marriage.

Tolentino's most significant contribution to Filipino drama is his symbolical plays, the most justly-celebrated of which is *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas* (1903).³² His experiments with symbolical drama had their greatest impact on Tagalog drama. Of Tolentino, Clodualdo del Mundo wrote: "... maliban kay Juan Abad, na siyang unang sumulat ng dulang sagisagin ... ay wala nang maituturing na pangunahing dramaturgo sa pagsulat ng dramang simboliko."³³

In the opening scene of Tolentino's *Ing Poeta*, Tolentino has the characters engage in a lively exchange of views about Pampangan dramatists:

31. "Ing Poeta," *ibid.*, pp. 279-318.

32. According to Manuel's checklist, Tolentino wrote a Pampangan version of this play entitled "Napun, Ngeni at Bukas," but there is no bibliographical evidence to confirm this. Assuming that there was such a Pampangan version, it does not seem likely, however, that it was ever staged, owing to the rigid censorship that followed the production of the Tagalog original.

33. Clodualdo del Mundo, "Aurelio Tolentino: Ang Unang Mandudulang Makabayan," *Surian ng Wikang Pambansa* 23 (Abril 1969), p. 5.

Mentu:

Obat pagcacasakitan meng
panintunan ing poeta,
king atmo caracal ding autoris a
manintun daptan, pablasang
capanintunan?

Cumeris:

A . . . ala cung balu keti Capampangan
me . . . metung man.

.....

Pedru:

Y Senor Don Juan a Soto Baculud?

Cumeris:

E . . . eke buri
a . . . ala yang balung daptan nune mu cauran:
anta ing Juliu't Agosto³⁴
e . . . ewari cauran? Ma . . .
makisiam pa!

.....

Calara:

Y Pabalan Baculud?

Cumeris:

E . . . eke buri:
ma . . . mapamasa yang tutu careng
zarzuelang Castila, saca . . . saca yang
aliwa nang susulat e ra buring
daramdaman deng dalaga.

.....

Maria:

O y Ellung?³⁵

Cumeris:

A . . . aros! Pal . . . palsu yang dili yan.
A . . . ala yang balung gawan a
macapacaili. Ing . . . ing Aslagtala³⁶
na, linto yang aslag viernesanto.
Saca . . . saca, bat mo ilaco no sapin
ding actor? Nanu mong palacaran na
canita? A . . .
alayang balu yan . . .

These evaluations were of course made in jest, but they reveal the camaraderie that bound these writers together and spurred them to a friendly competition that made this period the most productive phase of Pampangan dramatic history. "King panauan a iti karin ing ugtung-aldo na ning dramang kapampangan."³⁷

Mentu:

Why do you take such pains
to find a poet,
when there are so many authors
looking for jobs?

Cumeris:

I don't know of any poet here in
Pampangan, not even one.

.....

Pedru:

What about Juan Soto of Bacolor?

Cumeris:

I don't like him.
He doesn't know how to write anything
but weepy, sentimental plays.
Isn't Julio and Agosto rainy weather?
Sometimes, the rain lasts all of nine days!

.....

Calara:

What about Pabalan of Bacolor?

Cumeris:

I don't like him either.
He reads far too many
Spanish zarzuelas, and besides
some of his works contain things that
young ladies do not like to hear about.

.....

Maria:

Well, what about Ellung?

Cumeris:

Oh, he's the worst of the lot.
He doesn't know how to
write anything that can make the
audience laugh. His play *Aslagtala* was
as sombre as Good Friday. And another
thing, what's behind his making actors
go barefoot? No, no, he doesn't
know anything.

34. "Julio Agosto" is the title of a play by Soto.

35. "Ellung" was Tolentino's nickname.

36. "Aslagtala" ("Starlight") is a title of a play by Tolentino.

37. "This period marked the noon of Pampangan drama." (Yuzon, "Pamuklat," *Parnasang Capampangan*, ed. by Faustino P. Gutierrez [Ing Catimawan, 1932], p. 30).

There were many other dramatists during this same period but none of them gained comparable stature.³⁸ Among the minor playwrights of this period were the following: Jacinto Tolentino, Aurelio's older brother, who wrote the much-applauded zarzuela, *Ing Mañgaibugan* ("The Covetous One"), which was first presented in Teatro Trining in Guagua in 1901;³⁹ Felino Simpao is credited with several plays but the only one that has survived is *Gatbiala*, an adaptation of the opera *Il Trovatore*;⁴⁰ Monico Mercado who authored *Anino ning Milabas* ("Shadow of the Past") and *Iraya o Sultan ning Tundu*; Jose Gutierrez David, best remembered for *Ing Independencia*; Zoilo Hilario, who wrote several plays, the only extant one being the verse play, *Reyna Malaysia*.⁴¹

The members of a later group of dramatists were Isaac Gomez (1872–1948),⁴² who authored about twenty plays, the best-known being *Ing Sumpa ning Ulila* ("The Orphan's Vow") and *Ing Sampagang Asajar* ("The Orange Blossom"). Both of these tend towards melodrama: the former is about a love triangle involving two brothers and their adopted sister; the latter is about parental opposition to a marriage between a poor girl and a wealthy landlord whose grandfather had been murdered some years earlier by the girl's tenant-father. Sergio Navarro (1898–1972)⁴³ wrote about half a dozen plays, the most popular of which was *Viuda Alegre*, an adaptation of *The Merry Widow*. Roman P. Reyes (1906–1965) is best remembered for *Dayang Azul* ("Blue Blood"),⁴⁴ which was first presented in Macabebe in 1930 and at the Manila Grand Opera House the following year. This play has been presented over 120 times, making it the most frequently staged play in Pampangan literature.⁴⁵

The plot of *Dayang Azul* seems premised on the popular saying that blood is thicker than water. Although she is legally married to the wealthy Rodolfo, Dolores is treated by both her husband and her mother-in-law as a common maid in the household. Worse, they keep her from having any contact with her infant son,

38. For a bibliography of Pampangan plays, see the Appendix of *A Short History of Theatre in the Philippines*, ed. by Isagani R. Cruz (n.p., 1971).

39. Jacinto Tolentino, "Ing Mañgaibugan," (unpublished typescript, n.d.).

40. Tulio Raquel [Felino Simpao], *Gatbiala* (Wawa: Limbagan "Damayan," 1912).

41. Zoilo Hilario, "Reyna Malaysia," *Bayung Sunis* (mimeoscript, 1962).

42. Gloria Nacpil Laquian, "Isaac Cruz Gomez: An Analytical Study of his Dramatic Works" (M.A. thesis, Guagua National College, 1970).

43. None of Navarro's plays appear to have survived.

44. Roman P. Reyes, *Dayang Azul* (typescript, n.d.).

45. Javillonar, "Mariano Proceso Pabalan," p. 32.

Rogelio. In desperation, Dolores "kidnaps" Rogelio and retreats to the forests where she raises her son as a child of nature. Twenty years later, the young Mario — as he has been renamed by Dolores — comes to the aid of Don Ramon, who has been wounded during a hunting expedition. Impressed by the young man, Don Ramon persuades Dolores to let Mario go back with him to the town where he raises him as his own son. Soon, Mario falls in love with Virginia, Don Ramon's daughter. Virginia, feeling the same way about Mario, spurns her elderly suitor, the wealthy Don Rodolfo. Angered by this, Don Rodolfo conspires with Trining (the spinster sister of Don Ramon, who has her sights on the young Mario) to frame Mario for a theft in the household of Don Ramon. Meanwhile, Don Ramon is forced to promise Virginia's hand to Don Rodolfo, to whom he had earlier mortgaged his entire property. In prison Mario is visited by Dolores, who reveals to him his real identity as the son of Don Rodolfo. Hearing about the impending marriage between Virginia and Don Rodolfo, Mario escapes from prison. During their encounter, Don Rodolfo shoots and wounds Mario. Dolores arrives, too late to prevent the violence. Rodolfo recognizes Dolores and realizes that he has shot his own son. Meanwhile, Trining arrives with the police and points to Rodolfo as the mastermind behind the theft. A repentant Rodolfo begs forgiveness from his wife and son. The play ends with the young lovers receiving the blessings of both sets of parents.

Since the war, there have been no notable playwrights to replace those of the last generation.⁴⁶ Though *aficionados* continue to write zarzuelas, these have remained largely exercises in nostalgia.

II. POETRY

LYRIC POETRY

In Pampangan poetry, meter (*sukad*) is determined solely by the number of syllables (*silaba*) per line (*talatag*). The most frequent meters are those consisting of 6, 8, 12, and 16 syllables, arranged in a variety of stanzaic patterns. For lyric poetry, the most popular metre is that of 16 syllables in octaves.

Lines of verse in Pampangan are most frequently bound together by monorhyme (*monorima*), though in more recent years

46. For notes on contemporary dramatic productions, see Rodolfo Cortez, "The Contemporary Pampango Theatre" (M.A. thesis, University of Santo Tomas, 1963).

some poets have experimented with more complex rhyme schemes. As a rule, the rhyme involves only the final syllables, thus effecting the so-called masculine or imperfect rhyme (*sunis a e sakdal*), as in these lines from a poem by Monico Mercado.⁴⁷

| | |
|---|---|
| Makanyan labas keti babo yatu, anti mung paninap ing bye na ning tau; ayup yang linimpad, besibas yang batu, sala yang kinislap, mipaid yang banglu, ban dalam ning aun kasakmal nyang abu! | This is the way life in this world passes for man's life is only a dream: like a bird flown away, like a stone flung afar, like light vanished, like fragrance blown away and in the grave, nothing but a handful of ashes! |
|---|---|

In 1915, Zoilo Hilario introduced into Pampangan poetry the use of feminine rhyme, i.e., rhyme involving the last two syllables (*sunis a sakdal*). The following is the opening stanza of one of his poems:⁴⁸

| | |
|---|---|
| Mekeni, Oh Musa, kuldag kang taluntun king aslag ding tala, dalpakan tang dusa, gulutan tang pisak, arapan tang sala . . . | Come to me, O Muse Descend, treading starlight; Let us trample on sorrow, Let us turn our backs on darkness, let us face the light. |
|---|---|

In the early 1930's, Amado Yuzon experimented with the use of free verse (*timawang kawatasan*), as one notices in the following lines from one of these poems:⁴⁹

| | |
|---|---|
| Aduang batuin qng benging malungcut, maglayag queng banua, — busal na ning casaquitan acu at ica. Dapot ing capalsintan, malinis anting pangadi lalung saslag busal da ring luang malalasi. | Two stars against the dark, sailing in the sky, Amidst the loneliness, You and I. But love, pure as prayer, shines all the brighter amidst falling tears. |
|---|---|

Though Yuzon's lead was followed by some of his contemporaries and then by later poets, free verse did not appear to gain widespread popularity.

The list of lyric poets in Pampangan poetry is long; for convenience, one may speak of them in terms of three chronological groups. The first group consists of poets who wrote most extensively during the first quarter of the present century: Monico Mercado, Brigido Sibug, Cirilo Bognot, Zoilo Galang, Jose Sanchez, Agustin Bustos Zabala, Aurelio Tolentino, Isaac C. Gomez, Zoilo

47. Monico R. Mercado, "Kasakmal Nang Abu," *Parnasong Capampangan*.

48. Zoilo Hilario, "Aus King Musa," *Bayung Sunis* (mimeo-script, 1962).

49. Amado Yuzon, "Ica at Acu," *Poesias* (typescript, n.d.).

Hilario, Sergio Navarro and Juan Crisostomo Soto. Of these, the most prominent were Soto and Navarro. Although Soto was not as prolific a writer of poetry as he was of drama, his few poems are highly regarded. The most esteemed of these is "Lira, Dalit at Sinta," (Lyre, Song and Love), which won the top prize at a Rizal Day Celebration at San Fernando in 1917. Unfortunately, no copy of this poem can be located. Other poems of Soto which deserve mention are "Filipinas," "Malaysia," and "Ing Bandera." In 1920, a Pampangan magazine, *Ing Manimulin* ("The Pilot"), sponsored a poetry-writing contest. The board of judges awarded the first prize to a poem by Sergio Navarro entitled "Napun, Ngeni at Bukas" (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow). Today, it is regarded as a classic of Pampangan lyric poetry. It is a lengthy poem of 38 stanzas, each of which is a sestet of twelve-syllable lines. The following excerpt is the final stanza of the poem:⁵⁰

Lwid ka, Balayan a byasang mibata!

Lwid ka, malagung Komangging Sultana!
Ining kakung kanwan keka duruku ya
lalam nyang Bandilang tanda ning ligaya,
at karing bitis mu, keka yain ku la
ring takde, ing puso, ampon ing inawa!

Long live, my country who knows how
to bear suffering!

Long live, beautiful brown queen!
My head is bowed
to that flag that symbolizes our glory,
and at your feet, I offer
my arms, my heart, and my life!

The second group of poets are those who wrote much of their poetry in the decade and a half preceding the outbreak of the war: Bellarmino Navarro, Silvestre Punsalan, Eusebio Cunanan, Francisco Gozun, Salvador Tumang, Lino Dizon, Gil Galang, Aurea Balagtas, Rosa Yumul, Rosario Tuazon, Roman Reyes. Diosdado Macapagal, who was later to become President of the Republic, belonged to this group. His most acclaimed poem is a love lyric entitled "Chant D'amor." Undoubtedly, the most prominent poet of this period was Amado Yuzon (1906—), who first received attention for "Bayung Jerusalem" ("New Jerusalem"), which won a prize at a poetry-writing contest held in 1927. Since then, Yuzon has written several volumes of poetry. Of his poems belonging to this period, the best is "Buri Ku King Abalu Mu," ("I Want You to Know"), a love poem whose substance and style set the model for much Pampangan love poetry. The following is the opening stanza of that poem:⁵¹

50. Sergio Navarro, "Napun, Ngeni at Bukas," *Ing Manimulin* (30 Enero 1920), pp. 16-18.

51. Yuzon, "Buri Ku King Abalu Mu," *Poesias*.

Buri cu qñg abalu mu ngeni't qñg capilan pa man
 qñg ica palsintan daca sucad ning bie cung iñgatan:
 icang Musa ning pluma cung sasamba qñg mal mung leguan,
 icang bie na ning pusu cung titibuc qñg capalsintan;
 tegulaling co ngan queca caladua cu at catawan
 anting tapat mung caramé qñg ligaya't casaquitan –
 buri cu qñg abalu mung macanian dacang palsintan,
 capilas daca qñg bie cu't batuín qñg paintulungan.

I want you to know now
 and forever, / That I love
 you as much as I do my
 own life: / You are the
 muse whose beauty in-
 spires me, / You are the
 life of my heart which
 throbs with love; / I have
 dedicated my whole self,
 body and soul, / As your
 devoted companion in joy
 and in pain; / I want you
 to know that I love you in
 this way, / As a part of my
 life, as the star of my
 future.

The post-war poets who have made names for themselves are: Juanito Goingsco, Celestino Vega, Francisco Fernando, Abdon Jingco, Mariano Sigua and Jose Gallardo. The last three won the top prizes in a poetry-writing contest held in May, 1975 in honor of the birth centennial of Don Monico Mercado, a poet of the first period.

ARGUMENTATIVE VERSE: THE *CRISSOTAN*

Named in honor of Juan Crisostomo Soto (Crissot, the most familiar pseudonym of Soto, is an acronym derived from his two names), the *Crissotan* is described as the younger sibling of the Tagalog *balagtasán*.⁵² The term itself was coined by Yuzon in 1926 when he and a few friends organized the *Aguman Crissot* ("Crissot Society"). That same year, two years after the first *balagtasán* was held, they staged the first Crissotan in a private home in Santa Cruz, Manila. The two debaters in that event were Lino Dizon and Nicasio Dungo; the moderator was Yuzon. Yuzon, who has since participated in more than sixty Crissotans and was acclaimed the "King of Crissotan" in 1930,⁵³ gives the following account of a typical Crissotan.

52. "Ditak mu ing makayaliwa na ning minunang *Karagatan*. Anak ne ning *Karagatan* dapat ing lagyu na wali ne ning *Balagtasán* ding Tagalog." ("[The Crissotan] is only slightly different from the karagatan. It is an offspring of the karagatan, so it might be regarded as the younger sibling of the Tagalog balagtasán.") Yuzon, in *Parnasong Capampangan*, p. 32.

53. Yuzon won the title "Ari ning Crissotan" in 1930 after winning a debate on the question, "Insanu ing lacuas banal qñg sinta king Balen, lugud qñg indu at sinta qñg dalaga?" ("What is the holiest kind of love? Love for one's country, love for one's mother

A Crissotan is usually scheduled for presentation during town fiestas. Days before the event, the subject of the debate is agreed upon, e.g., whether it is preferable to live in the barrio or in the city, whether the pen is mightier than the sword, whether parents should arrange the marriages of their children. Though this practice enabled the participants to prepare their speeches well ahead of time, pains were taken to give the audience the impression of extemporaneity. One of the speakers, speaking from his place among the audience assembled before the stage, would challenge the speaker on stage to a debate. The latter would then of course accept the challenge and invite the other to ascend the stage. The moderator, called *lakandiwa*, would then deliver a speech, usually in prose but sometimes also in verse, explaining the subject of the debate. The debate proper is immediately preceded by a ritual during which each speaker addresses his muse, usually a young and pretty lady friend. Speaking in verse, the speaker begs her to inspire him during the poetical contest. As a token of her favor, the muse usually gives him a flower that he wears throughout the debate.

These preliminaries over, the debate itself begins. The debate usually consists of eight rounds, during each of which the speakers recite two stanzas each. The stanza is usually an octave of twelve, sometimes sixteen, syllables per line, bound together by monorhyme. On the basis of both rhetoric and oratory, one of the speakers is adjudged the winner by a board of judges or by the audience. In the case of the former, the board is composed of three persons, usually local poets who are specially invited for the event. In the case of the latter, the audience indicates their choice by loudly applauding the speaker they favor. A local celebrity, usually the reigning beauty queen, presents awards to the two speakers, the winner, of course, getting the larger share. The prizes range from cash to bottles of perfume to medals and trophies. In addition, the regional champion receives a gold-plated crown patterned to look like laurel leaves. With the crown goes the title of Poet Laureate.

Although much less popular now than they were before the war, Crissotans continue to draw crowds during town fiestas. However,

or love for a woman?") Yuzon spoke in favor of love for one's mother, Silvestre Punsalan for love of a woman, and Roman P. Reyes on love for country. This Crissotan was widely publicized because the three participants were recognized as the most eloquent orators of that period. Unfortunately, the text of this Crissotan is no longer extant.

there appears to be a consensus that the younger generation of Crissotan speakers do not possess the eloquence for which the older generation is still remembered.

METRICAL ROMANCE: THE *KURIRU*

It has been the common observation of literary historians that the reading fare of the Filipinos in the 19th century was actually that of the Spaniards in the 16th. Dean Fansler noted that as late as the close of the 19th century,

... nine-tenths of the books printed in the Philippine dialects were either religious ... or romantic and fantastic stories of the type ridiculed to death in the Peninsula by Cervantes [almost three hundred years earlier] The enchanter, Freston, who Don Quixote was convinced had carried off his beloved library, must have deposited it in the Philippines.⁵⁴

Freston apparently shelved a good number of these books in the province of Pampanga. Like other Filipinos, the Pampangans were enchanted by these metrical romances. However, unlike the Tagalogs who made a distinction between awits and corridos on the basis of syllabic count per line, the Pampangans referred to them by the common name *kuriru*, an obvious corruption of the Spanish term.⁵⁵

Most of the Pampangan kurirus were mere translations of Tagalog corridos. There are, however, at least two kurirus which are assumed to be Pampangan in origin because no editions of these are available in any other vernacular. These are *Conde Irlos* and *Palmarin*. Though the anonymous authors of these two works may have been Pampangans, *Conde Irlos* and *Palmarin* are not original compositions; in fact, both exhibit evidence of having been merely expanded adaptations of Spanish works.⁵⁶

In Pampanga, almost all of these kurirus came off the presses of Cornelio Pabalan Byron in Bacolor.⁵⁷ The imprints of extant kurirus indicate that most of these were printed during the years 1910–1925.⁵⁸ They were immensely popular and were sold along-

54. Dean Fansler is quoted in Eulogio B. Rodriguez, "The Development of Philippine Literature," *Encyclopedia of the Philippines* ed. by Zoilo Galang (Manila: McCullough Printing Company, 1950), I, pp. 56–57.

55. Eugenio, "Awit and Korido," p. 21.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–110; 577–87.

57. "Cornelio Pabalan Byron," *Parnasong Capampangan*, p. 98.

58. A handful of kurirus were printed in the 1950s by Aklatang Lunas in Manila, but the bulk of them were printed between the years 1910–1925, by Cornelio A. Pabalan

side novenas and other devotional pamphlets during town fiestas. To the list of regional folkheroes and Biblical characters were added the names of these newly imported heroes: Bernardo Carpio, Don Juan Tenorio, Jaime del Prado, Don Octavio, Jose Vendido, etc.

OTHER TYPES OF VERSE NARRATIVES

Besides the *kurirus*, there were other types of verse narratives. In 1914 Aurelio Tolentino published *Kasulatang Gintu* and *Napun, Ngeni at Bukas*, both written in the twelve-syllable quatrain of the *awit* form. *Kasulatang Gintu*⁵⁹ ("Golden Inscription") purports to give an account of the pre-Hispanic history of two kingdoms, Wawa and Dayat, in what is now known as the province of Pampanga. Informed by soothsayers that she will die soon after giving birth to a son, the widowed queen of Wawa, Munag-Sumala ("Dawn"), arranges with the king of Dayat, Makapagal, for the betrothal of her yet unborn son, Bayung-Aldo ("New Day"), to his yet unborn granddaughter, Atlung-Batuin ("Three Stars"). Fearful that after her death harm might come upon her infant son, Munag-Sumala conspires with Makapagal to conceal the true identity of Bayung-Aldo. Following the queen's instructions, Makapagal lays the newly-born Bayung-Aldo in a golden vessel and sets it afloat down the river. When the people discover the baby, they find an inscription on the vessel, informing them that the baby has been sent by God to protect the kingdom of Wawa. Thus led to believe that Bayung-Aldo enjoyed the protection of Divine Providence, the would-be invaders of Wawa leave the kingdom in peace. (In the meantime, Talijaga, the daughter of a slave, has been made to appear the real offspring of the late queen.) In Dayat, Makapagal's kingdom has been usurped by his ambitious son-in-law, and the old man flees to the mountains, where he disguises himself as the mythological folk-hero, Sinukuan. When Bayung-Aldo reaches manhood, Makapagal decides that it is time to reveal the true identity of Bayung-Aldo. He does so, providing as evidence a letter written in the hand of

Byron in Bacolor and by J. Martinez in Manila. Fortunately, about sixty of these *kurirus* have been preserved in the Harley H. Bartlett Collection of Ethnographic-Historical and Linguistic Materials in the Philippines and the East Indies, 1760-1957. The Bartlett Collection is available on microfilm at the University of the Philippines Library.

59. Aurelio Tolentino, *Kasulatang Gintu* (Manila: Imprenta y Litografia de Juan Fajardo, 1914).

the late queen as well as the gold chip he had broken off from the rim of the golden vessel many years before. This revelation also makes it possible for Bayung-Aldo to marry Atlung-Batuin with whom he has earlier fallen in love. Their marriage formally unites the two kingdoms, a union symbolizing the much-awaited time of Philippine independence.

Napun, Ngeni at Bukas ("Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow")⁶⁰ is more consistently allegorical. Though once again the temporal setting is that of pre-Hispanic times, the characters and events are unmistakably contemporary. Raxa Lakhan-Balen ("Country") is betrayed by his friend Samuel who, on the pretext of helping him ward off invaders, actually takes over the kingdom. Suffering from the wounds inflicted on him by Samuel during battle, Lakhan-Balen is left to die in a deep, dark ravine. His widow, Kalayan ("Freedom"), and his child Diwa ("Inspiration"), faithfully keep vigil over his grave. They are joined there by the few surviving followers of Lakhan-Balen, one of whom delivers an impassioned speech directed against Samuel and his collaborators. His speech is cut short by the gunfire from Samuel's troops, who mercilessly massacre the group. Widow and orphan are taken captive by Samuel, who tries to win their support by bribing them with a wealth of favors. He attempts to justify his past actions by claiming that they were motivated by a desire to help the kingdom prosper. As proof of his sincerity, Samuel enumerates the many material benefits he has brought to the kingdom: the roads, bridges, school-houses, etc. Though Kalayan readily acknowledges these benefits, she persists in pleading with him for her people to be set free. Samuel refuses, saying that the people are not yet strong enough to stand on their own feet; at the same time, he assures her that when he thinks them strong enough, he will set them free. In the meantime, one of the soldiers who has been posted to guard the grave of Lakhan-Balen writes Samuel a letter reporting the cataclysmic violence that has been taking place there. When Samuel goes there to investigate for himself, he stands before the grave, bows his head in reflection and then prays to God for guidance. As though in answer to that prayer, a clap of thunder sounds and Lakhan-Balen

60. Aurelio Tolentino, *Napun, Ngeni at Bukas* (Manila: Limbagang Noli, 1914). This is not to be confused with his drama of the same title, written ten years earlier. Manuel describes this work as the poetic version of the drama "with the libelous or seditious matter expurgated" (Manuel, p. 390) but, as the following summary shows, this description is not accurate.

is resurrected. The two embrace in reconciliation, and soon after, sign a treaty whereby Lakhan-Balen resumes sovereignty over his own kingdom.

The following year, Felix Galura published *Ing Cabiguan*,⁶¹ a long narrative poem in which he satirized the improbable, absurd plots of the *kurirus* and *kumidyas*. Interestingly enough, he wrote it in the same twelve-syllable quatrain of the *awit* form. He may have chosen this form precisely because he wanted to address himself to the readers who had become addicted to these metrical romances. It is clear from the preface that Galura intended *Ing Kabiguan* as a new type of verse narrative, one that would be as realistic as the *kurirus* were fantastic. He attempted to do this by telling a commonplace story of two ordinary people living in a familiar rural setting. Its protagonists, Jaime and Momay, are a pair of star-crossed lovers whose plans for elopement are frustrated by Momay's mother, Rosa, who files a legal suit against Jaime on the grounds of abducting a minor. Jaime is sentenced to prison for eight months, during which he consoles himself with the thought that the delay notwithstanding, he and Momay will eventually be reunited. Unknown to him, Momay dies just ten days before his release from prison. His joyful homecoming is shortlived when he hears the news of Momay's death. A final scene in the narrative takes place in the graveyard where Jaime leaves a crown of flowers at Momay's tomb.

1935 marked the publication of a major narrative poem, *Ketang Milabas*⁶² ("In the Past") by Monico Mercado (1875–1953). The work is interesting less for its story – a love triangle – than for its historical setting – the outbreak of Philippine-American hostilities in 1899 when the American forces led by General MacArthur conducted their Pampangan offensive against the Filipino forces led by General Mascardo. Luisa, the head of a Red Cross station in Porac, cannot decide between two equally qualified suitors: Antonio, a doctor, and Manuel, a lawyer. The two suitors are both serving in the army unit of General Mascardo, who has just transferred his headquarters from Wawa to Porac. Luisa's dilemma is sadly resolved by the death of Antonio, who is mortally wounded in battle. As he lies dying in the arms of Luisa, Antonio entrusts his beloved Luisa to the care of his childhood friend, Manuel.

61. Galura, *Ing Cabiguan*. Cf. pp. 71–74 above.

62. Monico R. Mercado, *Ketang Milabas* (Manila: Banaag Press, [1932]).

"Oyan i Luisa; ay! Keka yang luguran! . . . Uli ku't uli mu, ali me paburyan." ("There is Luisa! Love her . . . For my sake and for your own, take good care of her . . ."). Manuel accepts the trust willingly but is unable to act upon it because he decides to join the guerrilla forces, even after General Aguinaldo has called the Filipino patriots to lay down their arms. A year later, Luisa learns that Manuel has been captured and is confined in a hospital in Manila for treatment of typhus fever. Luisa arrives in time to help Manuel survive the critical phase of his illness. In her visits with him during his convalescence, Luisa tries to persuade Manuel to avail of the amnesty recently offered by President McKinley.

At nanu mo tang karokan
nung urungan itang laban
ban keta e la maguisan
ding anak na ning balayan?
Tumipun ta pang sikanan
king karela lalung dakal
bayu mulit makilaban;
ing susuku e manauang,
e makasirang dangalan
nun ya na ing karampatan.

And what is wrong
if we retreat from battle,
so that all the sons of the country
might not perish?
Let us gain more strength
than that of the enemy
before we resume the fight;
to surrender is not
dishonorable
when circumstances call for it.

Luisa's pleas move Manuel through successive phases of resistance, reluctance, and finally, resignation.

The unfolding of the love story is frequently interrupted by lengthy commentaries on miscellaneous aspects of Philippine life and history, e.g., the gains and losses incurred during our colonization by Spain; the significance of the Katipunan flag; the violation of Filipino national sovereignty by the Treaty of Paris. Mercado's attention seems so evenly divided between the story and the setting that it is sometimes difficult to say which of the two functions as the background for the other.

Ketang Milabas is remarkable also for its metrical variety. Although Mercado uses the twelve-syllable quatrain as his predominant metre, he frequently shifts to other metres, sometimes arbitrarily and sometimes not. In the latter case, the shift in metre is necessitated by the material. For example, there is a scene which portrays Luisa in a state of indecision regarding which suitor to accept. Unable to sleep one night, she becomes sensitive to the snatches of conversations and songs that she overhears: a soft *tumaila* (lullaby), a lilting *basultu* (a type of folk song), a quick-witted exchange of *duplo* verses. The numerous shifts in metre make *Ketang Milabas* a collage of various metrical feet (8, 12, 14

syllables per line) and stanzaic patterns (4-, 5-, 6-, 8- and 14-line stanzas).

Whether Isaac C. Gomez's *Calma ning Alipan*⁶³ ("The Fate of the Slave") may be classified as a verse narrative is debatable, since it bares only the faintest outline of a plot. Colonel Romer takes leave of his wife Elen before joining the forces of General Mascardo. Elen, who is pregnant with their first child, is understandably reluctant to see her husband leave for the battlefield. Her husband counsels her to be brave, reminding her of their common duty to the motherland. Elen overcomes her personal feelings and admonishes her husband:

Lugud ning anac mu't lugud ning asawa,
gawan mung baluti't gawan mung sandata,
nung datang ing aldo at mibalic naca
adua queng salubung a cumaul keca.

The love of your child and that of your
wife / forge into your shield and your
spear; / when the day of your return
comes, / there will be two of us to meet
and embrace you.

On the battlefield, Romer comes upon his old friend, Sargento Damian, who has been mortally wounded. After taking flowers to Damian's grave and praying for the repose of his soul, Romer retreats to the mountains to reflect. He is startled by the sight of an apparently deranged woman in search of her sons Crispin and Basilio. Romer recognizes Sisa and comforts her:

Nung qñg cabalanan ala nacang TRONO
licas deng guinabac susulud mung MANTU,
datang ing panaun subling pasibayu
leco rang CORONA – ng quildas qñg buntuc mu.

If in your own country you no longer
have a throne / and you have been
divested of your royal robes, / the
time will come when your crown –
/ which has been removed from your
head – will be returned to you.

The poem ends with this allegorical scene of mother and son, Sisa and Romer, grieving together yet comforted by each other.

The narrative proper takes up barely a third of the poem, the rest being an impassioned commentary on contemporary Philippine-American relations. The highly critical, sometimes cynical, tone of Gomez's commentary is well sustained throughout the poem and reaches a climax in that final allegorical scene.

Like Mercado, Gomez opted for more than one metre but limited

63. Isaac Cruz Gomez, *Calma ning Alipan* (Manila: Imprenta ning Santo Tomas University, 1935). This work is the sequel to an earlier verse narrative, *Dalit ning Balen* ("Song of the Country"). Unfortunately, the latter work is apparently no longer extant.

his choices to two: the 12-syllable quatrain and the 16-syllable sestet. He uses these two metres alternatively, the latter for the even-numbered chapters and the former for the odd-numbered chapters.

During the last several decades, long narrative poems have waned in both prominence and popularity but have not completely disappeared. A contemporary writer, Jose Gallardo (1918—), recently published a long narrative poem under the title *A las Diez ning Bengi* ("Ten O'clock at Night")⁶⁴ The poem consists of 931 stanzas written in 16-syllable quatrains. Unlike the other long poems discussed earlier, however, *A las Diez* is almost totally devoted to narrative. This is because the plot is that of a mystery thriller, and as such, has a relatively complex tale to tell. The setting is Manila, just before the outbreak of World War II. Aurora, the mestiza daughter of Mikoyama, a wealthy Japanese residing in Manila, overhears a conversation from which she learns that her father is in fact a spy for the Japanese government. She overhears his plan to meet Martin Solis, a Filipino spy who is to deliver to him certain secret documents. Determined to foil her father's plans to betray his adopted country, she goes to Solis' hotel room only to find him dead of a stab wound. (Later, it is learned that the real killer is a person totally uninvolved in the espionage ring.) She hurriedly goes through his clothes in search of the papers and later entrusts them to the safekeeping of Oscar Dula, a PC lieutenant who chances upon her in the victim's room. Her hurried departure later makes Oscar the prime suspect in the murder. Fortunately, the murder case is being investigated by an NBI officer, Nardo, who, being Oscar's long-time friend, is convinced that Oscar is innocent. Unknown to the police, Oscar and Aurora are being interrogated and tortured by Mikoyama, who demands the surrender of the secret documents. Both Oscar and Aurora refuse to give him any information; however, Aurora, fearing for Oscar's life, finally reveals the hiding place of the papers. Mikoyama leaves the two in a warehouse where a timebomb has been set to go off. The two manage to escape and contact the military authorities in time to prevent Mikoyama from leaving the country. Preferring death to surrender, Mikoyama commits *hará-kiri*. Twenty-four hours after their fateful meeting at ten o'clock the previous night, the lovers exchange vows of love for each other and for their common country.

64. Jose M. Gallardo, *A las Diez ning Bengi* (n.p., n.d.).

III. PROSE NARRATIVES⁶⁵

The immense popularity of the awits and corridos alarmed some Pampangan writers who believed that these fantastic tales had no relevance to contemporary life and offered no instructive value. The most outspoken of these critics was Felix Galura who satirized the awits and corridos in his long narrative poem, *Ing Cabiguan*. In his Preface, Galura warned his readers not to expect the fantastic characters and tales they had grown accustomed to find in the *kurirus*. All of these fantastic happenings, he claims, are but the products of a fevered mind. If the reader has become satiated with such tales, Galura invites him to taste this new type of reading fare: a verse narrative of contemporary life.

Nung ing paglasa mu babasang macamal
ing ENCANTO'T TAPANG antina nang sewan,
mangapad ca pamung sumubuc at tacman
quetang linutu na ning tune CATUTUAN.

If your appetite, dear reader,
has become satiated with these fantasies,
then taste this new fare
which has been prepared by Truth.

In fact, *Ing Cabiguan* is not all that different from the metrical romances it sought to replace. Although stripped of the more exotic trappings, the narrative retains the heavy romanticism of the *kurirus*. The real break from metrical romances was made earlier by Soto whose work, *Lidia*,⁶⁶ was the first prose narrative of its kind in Pampangan literature. By using contemporary material for his plot,⁶⁷ and prose as his medium, Soto gave his work the features of contemporaneity and realism that were to ultimately distinguish the new prose narratives from the metrical romances.

Lidia is plotted around a love triangle involving Lidia, her sweetheart Hector, and her secret admirer F. D. Although they had professed undying love for each other, Hector is distraught to find Lidia repeatedly hurting and humiliating him. Hector makes every attempt to discover the cause of Lidia's changed attitude towards him but fails to elicit any explanations from her. Unknown

65. Pampangan writers apparently do not make formal distinctions among various types of prose narratives; they tend to refer to both novels and short stories by the common term *salita* (tale). The following discussion is limited to full length prose narratives.

66. Juan Crisostomo Soto, "Lidia," *Lidia* (Manila: Imprenta de Santos at Bernal, 1907).

67. In fact, Soto based the plot on a real life incident. In his preface to the novel, Soto confesses: "... eque isulat ing tutu nang lagui, pablasang ing maqui bie caniting salita, mabie yapa, at mecad emu misan acasabi mune." ("... I will not write the real name [of Lidia] since the woman upon whom she was based is still alive, and it is likely that you have spoken to her more than once before.")

to Hector, his best friend in Manila, H. D., is in love with Lidia and has been telling her lies about his supposed infidelity. In despair, Hector takes an overdose of morphine inside the family's drug store. It is only then that Lidia discovers the fidelity of Hector and the treachery of H. D.

Lidia first appeared in serial form in a periodical, *Ing Emañgabiran* ("The Impartial One"), which Soto edited at the time. When the novel appeared in book form, it had already assumed the popularity of a bestseller. An abbreviated version of it was reprinted in 1936, in two issues of a periodical, *Ing Kapampangan*.⁶⁸

Lidia remains the most popular novel in Pampangan literature, a rank it shares with only one other work, Aurelio Tolentino's *Ing Buac nang Ester* (A Strand of Ester's Hair).⁶⁹ In subject matter, the former might be said to have set the rule for Pampangan fiction, and the latter to have been the exception that confirmed the rule. *Lidia* is a simple love story. Since the course of true love never runs smooth, much of the novel is taken up with recounting the twists and turns it takes until it finally reaches its destination, which, in the case of *Lidia*, is a dead end. Most Pampangan fiction travels this well-worn path, but not Tolentino's novel, in which the love story is merely the excuse for the main plot.

Gerardo, the adopted son of Don Luis Gatsalian, is jealous of Ruben, the real son of Don Luis. The latter has just returned home from medical studies and is being feted at a dinner where there is talk about his entering politics. Ruben is engaged to be married to the beautiful Gloria with whom Gerardo is also in love. With the assistance of Dimas, a bandit, Gerardo abducts Gloria. He then frames Ruben for both the abduction and the apparent murder of Gloria. He does this by staging a scene in which he, disguised as Ruben, actually poisons his mistress Quintana, who is similarly disguised as Gloria. On the basis of the testimony of several eye-witnesses, Ruben is tried *in absentia* and sentenced to hang. In the meantime, Gloria's rape by Gerardo is prevented by Juaning, Dimas' wife, who is killed in the process. Gloria and the repentant Dimas return to town in time to prevent the hanging of Oscar, Ruben's best friend, who had volunteered to take his place. The resourceful Oscar devises an elaborate ruse to capture the real

68. *Ing Kapampangan* (15 Abril 1946), (31 Mayo 1946).

69. Aurelio Tolentino, *Ing Buac nang Ester* (2nd ed.; Manila: Faustino Pineda Gutierrez, 1931). The first edition appeared in 1911.

villain by advertising a reward for the return of a folded handkerchief bearing a strand of hair belonging to Ester, Ruben's sister and Oscar's sweetheart. The avaricious Gerardo takes the handkerchief from the captured Ruben and claims the reward, thereby incriminating himself as the real abductor of Gloria as well as the real murderer of Quintana. Thus, at the end, it is a single strand of Ester's hair that incriminates the guilty Gerardo.

Although there are other Pampangan fictional works with plots constructed around similar crimes, they are not mysteries in the way Tolentino's novel is. For example, Zoilo Galang's *Capatac a Lua* (Teardrop),⁷⁰ which comes closest to approximating *Ester* as a detective story, has its detective-protagonist solve the crime by the convenient devices of coincidence and confession. While searching the countryside for clues, the detective stumbles upon the murderer, who then readily confesses to the crime. Tolentino makes no use of such shortcuts, preferring to lead his readers through a labyrinth of clues.

The text of the first edition of *Ester* (1911) is prefaced by an open letter to Tolentino from Felino Simpao, a prominent writer-critic of that period. In it, Simpao expresses hearty approval of the novel's didacticism and admiration for its lyrical use of the Pampangan language. Simpao's enthusiastic endorsement of the novel helped to boost its circulation and apparently led to the issue of a second edition in 1914.⁷¹ Seventeen years later, the third edition was prepared by Faustino Pineda Gutierrez,⁷² the editor-publisher of *Ing Catimawan* (Freedom), a magazine billed as the Pampangan counterpart of *Liwayway*. The title page refers to *Ester* as "ing novela ring anggang novela." ("the novel of all novels"). The preliminary matter of this posthumous edition includes a reprint of Simpao's 1911 letter and a Foreword by Gutierrez explaining his decision to reprint the novel. Had Gutierrez not been confident of its sale, one assumes that he would not have financed the publication of so lengthy a novel. At 218 pages,

70. Zoilo Galang, *Capatac a Lua* (Manila: Decena Publishing Company, 1925).

71. According to Manuel's checklist, a second edition was printed in 1914. However, there seems to be no extant copy of this edition. The Pampangan novel met with such popular success that Tolentino later decided to write a Tagalog translation, *Ang Buhok ni Ester*, which he published in three volumes in 1914-15.

72. The Gutierrez edition was published in two volumes: Vol. I (Manila: Faustino Pineda Gutierrez, 1931); Vol. II (n.p., n.d.). The imprint of this edition claims that it is the second edition. However, if there really was an edition printed in 1914, then it would count as the third.

Ester is by far the longest Pampangan novel. A more reliable index of its popularity is the oral testimony of the Pampangans. When asked about Pampangan novels, they invariably mention *Ester*. There is no question that it was both a critical and a popular success.

Lidia and *Ester* stand apart in the field of Pampangan fiction. No other works can claim half the stature of either. Just the same, there are some other works of fiction which merit mention here. Four of these are novels which were printed in book form and for that reason alone may be presumed to have enjoyed a certain degree of circulation.⁷³

In 1923, Zoilo Galang wrote a novel which he published in two parts, each under a different title: *Ing Capalaran*⁷⁴ ("Fate"), and *Ing Galal ning Bie*⁷⁵ ("The Prize of Life"). The story tells of the love affair between Luzing and Conrado, which is opposed by Luzing's mother, who favors a rich suitor for her daughter. Leopoldo, a wealthy suitor, chances upon the lovers as they are about to elope, and he has Conrado arrested on charges of theft. Bribed by Leopoldo, the local courts find Conrado guilty but their rulings are later reversed by the Supreme Court. In the meantime, Luzing becomes seriously ill. Receiving news of her illness, Conrado visits her. Their heart-rending reunion moves Luzing's mother to consent to the marriage. Leopoldo is later discovered floating in the river, an apparent suicide.

Galang's other novel, *Capatac a Lua*⁷⁶ has a tighter plot. Its protagonist is Roque Punu, a detective based in Manila, who is vacationing in his hometown. While there, he is called by the chief of police to help solve the murder of their childhood friend, Jesus, who has been brutally murdered inside the house of his prospective father-in-law, Don Andres Lansang. After an intensive search, Roque finds Ariston, a rejected suitor of Jesus' fiancée,

73. According to a recent study (Lourdes H. Vidal, "Descriptive Study of Capampangan Prose Narratives" [M.A. thesis, Ateneo de Manila University, 1975]), there are only six Pampangan novels that were published separately in book form: Tolentino's *Ester*, Galang's *Ing Capalaran*, *Ing Galal ning Bie*, *Capatac a Lua*, Gomez's *Magdalena*. The most recent is Ciriaco Cunanan's *Ing Mamatawad Cabanalan* (Manila: Aklatang Lunas, 1963). Since Mrs. Vidal had no access to private collections, she based her count only on volumes available at the National Library and the University of the Philippines Library; it is possible that there are other novels similarly printed in book form, but as of the present time they are not available.

74. Zoilo Galang, *Ing Capalaran* (Manila: Dizon y Cia, Inc., 1923).

75. Zoilo Galang, *Ing Galal ning Bie* (Manila: Dizon y Cia, Inc., 1923).

76. Zoilo Galang, *Capatac a Lua* (Manila: Decena Publishing Co., 1925).

who confesses to the murder and later commits suicide in the municipal jail.

As its title suggests, *Magdalena*⁷⁷ by Isaac C. Gomez has as its protagonist a prostitute who is inspired to reform her life. Angeling falls in love with Leony, a medical student, but is unable to marry him because of parental objections from both sides. As expected, Leony's mother objects to having a prostitute as a daughter-in-law. Strangely enough, Angeling's own mother also opposes the marriage because it would mean less income for the family. Leony leaves for Manila, determined to forget Angeling. In the meantime, his sister, Luming, deserts their sick mother to marry the rich Enriquitu. Unknown to Leony, the kind-hearted Angeling nurses the old woman during his absence. Upon his return home from his studies, Leony finds his mother in the care of Angeling. He recognizes her true worth and marries her.

After the war, there was a decline in the growth of Pampangan fiction. The prohibitive cost of publishing novels in book form probably discouraged would-be novelists and led them to write short stories instead. Unfortunately, they often found it difficult to publish even these short stories because most Pampangan newspapers and magazines were shortlived.

* * *

Since the war, Pampangan literature has shown symptoms of gradual but steady decline. The causes of this decline are undoubtedly varied and complex, but one of them could be geography. Because of Pampanga's proximity to the Tagalog-speaking regions, most Pampangans are bilingual.⁷⁸ The compulsory study of Pilipino in schools and the wide accessibility of Pilipino reading materials have reenforced this bilingualism. One result is that the younger generation of readers has shown a decreasing interest in Pampangan, as language and as literature. A dwindling reading audience plus spiralling publication costs have curtailed the lifespans of Pampangan periodicals which might otherwise have sustained the

77. Isaac Gomez, *Magdalena* (Manila: The Republic Press, 1930).

78. According to the *Pampanga 1970 Census of Population and Housing* (Manila: National Census and Statistics Office, 1974), 66.7% of the inhabitants of Pampanga are able to speak Pilipino.

79. At present, there is only one magazine that features articles in Pampangan: *Campuput*, which is billed as the only Pampango-English magazine." It was founded in November 1974 at San Fernando by its editor-publisher, Ulpiano E. Quizon.

growth of Pampangan literature.⁷⁹ Without regular Pampangan reading fire to nourish them, the younger generation of writers have turned to Pilipino media. This trend towards Pilipino poses a threat to the very survival of Pampangan literature. Whether the recent resurgence of interest in vernacular literatures will avert that danger remains to be seen.