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**Hazel J. Wigglesworth**  
**Ampatuan Ampalid**  
**The Song from the Mango Tree**

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for nonacademic readers, the book provides an exciting journey into a community's not-so-distant history.

The publication of *The Women of Malolos* is certain to inspire future generations of historians. It is proof that, out of a single document, an entire history can be written that is both familiar and liberating.

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Hazel J. Wigglesworth and Ampatuan Ampalid, **The Song from the Mango Tree**. Foreword by Miguel A. Bernad, S.J. Manila: Linguistics Society of the Philippines, 2004. 281 pages.

On the uppermost part of the front cover, above the book title, is the sentence: "A Manobo Raconteur Introduces His Repertoire of Oral Literature with a Favorite Trickster Narrative," which can be taken as a subtitle, a blurb, or an annotation. The book is a diglot, or bilingual, collection of five relatively long folktales told by Ilianen Manobo storyteller Ampatuan Ampalid to Dr. Hazel Wigglesworth, who provides not only the English translation but also abundant annotations on the translation, rhetorical devices, and cultural context. The five stories are two Pilanduk (or trickster) tales, an animal tale, a courtship-by-trial tale, and a novelistic tale of the child-as-dragon slayer. Each of these tales consists of a series of episodes cleverly linked together by structural devices that make the episodes integral to one another.

"Pilanduk and the Crocodile Chief" is the tale to which the book title alludes. In this tale Pilanduk decides to kidnap the chief's wife, who lives across the sea. He promises to give this woman to the crocodile chief if it will take him across the water. Reaching the chief's yard, Pilanduk climbs a mango tree under cover of night and entices the chief's wife with a song. The woman becomes enamored with what she thinks is a magical bird and goes to the mango tree to

capture him. It is she who is captured by Pilanduk instead and the chief shouts for the servants to retrieve her. The comic pursuit ends at the edge of the sea, where the crocodile chief is waiting for Pilanduk and its reward. Pilanduk reneges on his promise and the chief's servants are able to take the woman back, although Pilanduk eludes capture. But now he is in trouble with the crocodile chief who vows to pursue him wherever he will go: "into a hole in the ground, the sky above, or to the underworld, I'm going to follow you until I kill you—I'm going to be your enemy" (45).

But the kidnapping tale is only a third of the whole story and functions more like a prologue, because this is followed by Pilanduk and the crocodile engaging in a contest of wits. It is this contest that gives the story greater breadth and complexity. The crocodile's relentless pursuit provides reason for the variety of settings in which increasingly difficult types of trickery are dramatized. The cast of characters also multiplies, because Pilanduk must turn to smaller members of the animal kingdom for help. Pilanduk invariably wins, but he also grows increasingly weary of being in a state of constant anxiety. Finally, the crocodiles are massacred. Despite Pilanduk's final victory, the story ends on an ominous note, because the lone surviving crocodile is a pregnant one.

In the second tale, "Pilanduk and the Giant," the mischievous trickster saves the world from a devouring giant that is fast depleting the world's population. Pilanduk tricks the giant into allowing himself to be tied securely to a *kelipapa* (molave) tree. After the giant frees himself, there follows a series of encounters between Pilanduk and the giant, who never recognizes Pilanduk because of his clever disguises. Again, Pilanduk takes recourse to animals—honeybees, a pair of pythons, and two very large deer—to obstruct the giant who pursues him. These give Pilanduk the lead time to plot the giant's demise, which ends the story.

Both these tales begin with Pilanduk living alone at a remote distance from village settlements. Two contradictory but equally acceptable reasons are given for his lonely life. In the first tale the reason for his solitude is that he is an inveterate liar and people must therefore keep away from him. In the second tale his solitude keeps him "far away from those doing evil" (73), although, for plot purposes at the very least, he lives near a trail so that he can still hear news from people passing by.

Manobo chieftains also use certain types of folk tales to validate decisions they make in the settling of custom-law cases. The third tale, "Lizard and Deer," illustrates the circuitous route that a case takes from complainant, then through several other suspects, and back to complainant again. Wrigglesworth's introduction to this particular story mentions that the storyteller Ampalid recalls how his own father, a Manobo chieftain, was guided by this tale in the settling of a real-life case in which he needed "to redirect the charges back to the plaintiff" (108).

Lizard's attempt to hunt for food triggers a chain of startled reactions, starting with Shrimp, to Turtle, to Crocodile, to Woodpecker, and finally to Deer, who, in his agitation, accidentally tramples on and kills Lizard's little children. The grieving Lizard takes her case to the chieftain's court, and the chieftain traces the original culprit back to the Lizard herself.

The tale concludes: "Whenever someone catches a lizard, he bends its tail around to its mouth in order to hang it over his carrying pole, so that what is used to carry it by is its own tail." It is an image that evokes the beautifully geometric textile-and-woodcarving designs of Philippine southern tribes. But one might also surmise that the reptile being referred to in this tale is a gecko or iguana (*bayawak*), or at least a reptile larger than the miniscule house lizard that would not be worth hunting down for its meat nor big enough to be bent and hung over a hunter's pole.

"Butterfly and Flower" is a charming courtship tale replete with imagery designed not only to awaken one's sense impressions but also to evoke romantic sentiments. The story begins with Flower undoing the topknot of her hair as she sits by her window, so that its "sweet fragrance" (136) wafts toward Butterfly, who is sitting at his doorway. He sets out to find the source of the fragrance, and when their eyes at last meet, "it was like tree-sap had suddenly glued your eyes together as you looked at each other" (139). One day the restless Princess "gathers together all of her radiant glow" and goes out for a walk. Everyone she passes falls into a stupor because of her overpowering fragrance. She comes upon Butterfly and she, too, becomes smitten by him, because "your waistline is as slender as a stripped young shoot of golden bamboo" (141). They exchange greetings and it is "like the sound of

bamboo exploding" (145). But the plot complication arises with a rival, Cross-Eyed-Young-Man. Because the tale starts *in medias res* we only now discover that there is some dispute between Butterfly and Cross-Eyed-Young-Man over who has prior claim to Flower's hand by capturing Queen Idederi's talking bird. This back story contains the familiar motif of suitors being sent out by the chieftain to capture a special object (in this case, the bird), an elderly woman giving each suitor instructions and a magic object to aid him in his quest, and the treachery of the failed suitor who falsely claims credit for the accomplishment of the task.

The need to settle the case in court provides plot motivation for chiefs from various parts of the land to converge and contribute to the discussion of the case. The arguments that fly back and forth are obvious illustrations of real-life methods by which rival claimants in a settlement case may be tripped up on their own lies. Queen Idederi, the owner of the magic bird, finally uses her shamanic powers and medicine to resolve the case in Butterfly's favor. And the story ends on an etiological note: "And that is why it can still be seen today that whatever kind of flower it may be, it's always butterflies that are still seen alighting on all the flowers" (197).

Although not the lead character, Queen Idederi is a most interesting character in her own right, because she does not conform to formula. She is annoyed at the intrusion into her privacy: "You have brought trouble to me," she says to Butterfly. "I was very peaceful here, but you have made a game out of me" (165). And yet, when news spreads that she will appear in public, people come in droves to gaze at her enchanting beauty, with her golden hair. And the story's end stresses her impartiality in the settlement of the case: "She had not expressed her personal feelings as to which way the case should be settled" (197).

The fifth and last tale, "The Child Who Was Abandoned by His Parents," is what Philippine folktale-compiler and taxonomist Damiana Eugenio would classify as a novelistic tale because of its length and episodic structure. It begins in a season of famine. The child, abandoned by his parents, sets out of the house. Because of his kindness, he acquires magic objects and wins the loyalty of a grateful lion, all of which will save him from future dangers.

The child comes upon a deserted village, where he slays a dragon with his magic sword. With his betel nut chew, he brings the dragon's victims back to life and then continues on his way.

In another village, he anonymously wins a game of kickball, which is actually a contest for the hand of the chieftain's daughter. The ball is made of iron "as big as a rice mortar" (243), but he is able to kick the iron ball so high it "hits the zenith above and makes a cracking sound in the sky" (243). The various suitors lay false claim, since no one has witnessed the child's feat. To identify the real winner, the daughter wraps a betel-nut chew in a *tubew* (headkerchief) that she has been embroidering and tosses it in the air. It flies around seven times until it drapes itself on the child's shoulders.

A crowd of raiders interrupt the wedding celebration but the child, "whose eye teeth are still growing" (265), again saves the village with his magic sword and the help of his ally, the lion. Again, the child humbly refuses the chieftainship that his father-in-law offers. "And there ends my telling about it, because the child lived happily there for a very long time."

In his Foreword, Miguel Bernad S.J., stresses the urgency of collecting the literature of indigenous peoples whose existence is threatened by several factors: landownership problems, massive in-migration, industrialization, and technological development. And yet, these effects of modernization paradoxically have not solved the basic problems of illness and disease that are also wiping out their population. Hazel Wrigglesworth's two raconteurs, the Ampalid brothers Juanito and Ampatuan, were killed by tuberculosis, a disease that is now supposed to be virtually extinct because of simple immunization but still "the dreaded number-one killer of Ilianen Manobos" (4).

Wrigglesworth's Introduction itself gives a riveting account of how Juanito and Ampatuan came to acquire the art of storytelling, first from their father and then from others such as the "captivating" (5) storyteller Erik-ik, who died before the two brothers realized the seriousness of her art. The Introduction also includes an explanation of Manobo oral literature's twin tasks of entertainment and reinforcement of the tribe's value system. There is a general description of the rhetorical devices used in storytelling and the effect of these on audience-

raconteur relationship. For example, when the raconteur shifts tenses from past to present, or pronouns from “you” as literary character to “you” as member of the audience, “he not only excites his audience’s aesthetic appreciation but evokes a high degree of presence—causing the listener to see himself in the midst of the very danger being described in the story” (12). These are only some of the rhetorical devices from a large repertoire that the raconteur must choose from in the course of his storytelling, taking care to match the point of the story with the tribe’s cultural values.

Anthologies and studies of oral literature have tended to treat the texts as written literature. Hence, this book’s most important contribution to the preservation of Philippine oral literature is Wigglesworth’s painstaking work of annotating certain passages as oral rhetorical devices and inserting the audience’s comments in the course of the storytelling. For example, fictional devices of dramatic irony and suspense contained in the tales are not only recognized by this reader because of her familiarity with such devices but are confirmed by the audience’s own explicitly expressed recognition of them. When Pilanduk promises to give the queen to the crocodile, the audience comments: “Maybe he’s lying.” And sure enough, several pages later, Pilanduk does go back on his word. At several points in the story, when the storyteller pauses at a narrative peak, the audience urges: “Keep on! Don’t stop here!”

Hence, although “Pilanduk and the Crocodile Chief” and “Lizard and Deer” were previously published in Wigglesworth’s *An Anthology of Ilianan Manobo Folktales* (1981), with the titles “Pilanduk” and “Lizard,” one might say that these reprints are a different set of texts entirely, because they comply with a different set of poetics, and hence belong to a different discursive system. Fittingly, the book’s title stresses the oral nature of its contents, i.e., like any “song,” these tales are not to be read solely like lyrics on a music sheet but are to be heard and seen being performed, or at least *imagined* by the reader to be so.

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