

## LESSON 13

### Mga Talang Pangkultura Mga Kuwentong Bayan Folk Narratives

In a previous lesson, you have read the myth “Malakas at Maganda” (The Strong and the Beautiful). This may have prompted you to become more interested in indigenous or traditional folk narratives such as myths, legends and folk tales. How can you learn more about these stories?

Among the first scholars who compiled these folk narratives were: Dean S. Fansler (*Philippine Folktales*, manuscript, 1922); H. Otley Beyer (*Philippine Folklore, Customs and Beliefs*, typescript, 20 volumes, 1922); Felipe Landa Jocano (*Outline of Philippine Mythology*, Manila: CEU Research and Development Center, 1969), and Damiana Eugenio, who published the seven-volume *Philippine Folk Literature Series* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press) from 1982–1994.

While Fansler indexed available Philippine materials, Eugenio, a professor at the University of the Philippines, compiled the narratives from over 300 sources. A few of Eugenio’s sources were: early accounts of Spanish friars, such as Francisco Colin, S.J.’s, *Labor Evangelica*, 1663, found in Emma Blair and James Robertson’s 55-volume *The Philippine Islands, 1483–1898* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur A. Clark Company, 1903–1909); works of early Philippine studies scholars such as Ferdinand Blumentritt’s “Diccionario Mitologico de Filipinas” in *La Solidaridad*, 5 (105), June 15-1893-7 (150), April 30, 1895), and Isabelo de los Reyes’s “Mitologia Filipina” in *Renacimiento Filipino*, 2 1893; compilations of Americans scholars and enthusiasts such as Roy Barton’s *The Mythology of the Ifugaos* (Philadelphia: The American Folklore Society, 1955), Charles Skinner Montgomery’s *Myths and Legends of Our New Possessions and Protectorate* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1900), and Mabel Cook Cole’s *Philippine Folk Tales* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1916); “retellings” by writers such as Paula Malay’s rendering of around eighteen narratives published in *Women’s Weekly Magazine* from 1954–1957 and Pedro Reyes Vilanueva’s “Alamat ng mga Kayumanggi (Legends of the Brown Race),” (Manila: Philippine Book Company, 1949); several thesis and dissertations, among them, Perla Nelmidia’s “Pangasinan Folk Literature” (1982) and Vivencio Jose’s “Creation and Flood Myths in Philippine Folk Literature” (1974); and works that focused on particular regions, provinces or cultural communities, such as Berton Maxfield and W.H. Millington’s “Visayan Folktales I, II and III, in the *Journal of American Folklore*, 1906–1907, Ma. Lilia Realubit’s “A Socio-linguistic Study of Bikol Verbal Folklore” (Ph.D. dissertation, 1986), and Laurence Wilson’s *Ilongot Life and Legends* (Manila: Bookman Press, 1967).

In her introduction to her collections of folk narratives, Eugenio (1993 xiii) quotes William Bascom’s definitions of myths and legends as found in “The Forms of Folklore: The Prose Narratives,” *Journal of American Folklore* 78 (307): 3–20. According to

Bascom, myths are “considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past,” are usually “sacred and associated with ritual.” Thus, many myths recount the activities of deities or are concerned with the origin of the world or of humankind. In contrast, legends are set in a period less remote, are more secular than sacred, and have humans as principal characters. Legends, according to Bascom, “tell of migrations, wars, and victories, deeds of past heroes, chiefs and kings, and succession in ruling dynasties.”<sup>1</sup> Folktales, on the other hand, are told for amusement and sometimes had for its characters, animals.

I recommend to students of Filipino language and literature, four books that provide us with new ways of looking at legends and myths. First, Reynaldo Ileto’s *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines 1840–1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979), which has a chapter on the legend of Bernardo Carpio, a story derived from a metrical romance but appropriated by the Tagalogs as a tale of liberation. Second, Resil Mojares’s *Waiting for Mariang Makiling: Essays in Philippine Cultural History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002), which not only analyzes the Mariang Makiling legend as told by Jose Rizal, but also asserts that “folklore is not unitary, homogeneous and non-controversial,” and that it can serve contradictory interests—the legitimization of a dominant social order or its demystification and subversion.”<sup>2</sup> Third, Hermina Meñez *Explorations in Philippine Folklore* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1998), which provides a feminist reading of Philippine epics, and *Verbal Arts in Philippine Indigenous Communities: Poetics, Society, and History* (Quezon City, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009).

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<sup>1</sup> From Bascom 1965: 3-5 in Eugenio 1993: xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Mojares, Resil. *Waiting for Mariang Makiling*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002, 4).