

BILAY ED CABOLOAN: RECONFIGURATION OF SPACE
USING A NEW HISTORICIST LENS

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We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.

- Thornton Wilder

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ABSTRACT

This study is focused on analyzing all 31 poems by Santiago Villafania (1971) in his book, *Balikas na Caboloan*. The aim of this study is to reveal how his use of his native language and cultural heritage has transformed Pangasinan from a tangible, physical place to a state of ideology, which is Caboloan.

Using Stephen Greenblatt's theory of New Historicism, the significance of the texts were analyzed by first, describing the values, mores and the researcher's knowledge of the history of Pangasinan, particularly at the time indicated in the texts; second, by reflecting on how Villafania's personal historical circumstances affected or influenced the text; and third, by identifying and appreciating the social mores that were communicated within the text.

The study shows that Villafania's poetry was heavily influenced by his personal account or view of his environment, specifically, the place where he grew up in, Pangasinan. The practices, beliefs and ultimately, the way of life insinuated within the text are reminiscent of an older time, thus transforming Pangasinan, as we know it today, back to Caboloan.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of literature is part and parcel of the existence of language. In the Philippines, the first period of our literary history is the longest, though we often overlook this fact because most Filipinos were forced to begin counting from 1521 when the Westerners first arrived and renamed our archipelago *las islas Filipinas* (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005). Despite the Spaniards' taking over our land and in due course, our way of life, that is not to say that our own literature, the oral lore, succumbed to their rule. Even if the impact of Western culture grew in intensity, "the pervasiveness of the oral lore of the early Filipinos [continued], surfacing at certain historical moments, but most of the time [remained] unobserved because [it is] submerged in the culture of the colonizing power" (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005, 1). The oral literature of the pre-colonial Filipinos was marked by certain aspects of the community. The subject matter was often "the common experience of the people constituting the village: food-gathering; creatures and objects of nature; work in the home; field, forest or sea; caring for children, etc" (Litera1-EN n.d.). The most common forms of oral literature back then were riddles, proverbs and songs. However, as time passed, we saw a gradual decline of regional literature due to the lack of recorded oral lore and the difficulty in deciphering what had already been recorded. Colonization by the Spaniards also took its toll on the growth and development of our literature. "The perishable materials on which the Filipinos wrote were disintegrated and the missionaries who believed that indigenous pagan culture was the handicraft of the devil himself destroyed those that remained" (Litera1-EN n.d.).

However, due to national occurrences and events in our country during the first half of the 20th century, our written literature among the different Philippine ethno-linguistic groups witnessed a renaissance. During the mid 19th century, there was, generally, a low level of literacy among the natives and only a few printing presses allowed for secular literature but all of these changed during the American regime (Baltasar, Erestain and Estanislao 1981). “The downfall of Spanish colonialism freed the printing press from the stranglehold of religious censorship. . . . All over the country, newspapers and magazines using local language proliferated” (Lumbera and Lumbera, 2005, 87). And finally, after the EDSA Revolution (1986 to present), we saw a resurfacing of regional literature because the aim, then, was to develop writings that are multi-lingual and multi-cultural (Litera1-EN n.d.). However, the resurgence of regional literature in that era became almost static, in that, up to the present, there are still very few regional works that have been published and recognized. One reason for this is probably because “no one familiar with Philippine vernaculars, through study or use, seriously questions any longer their viability or power-potential as media for both daily communication and more durable literary works” (Casper 1980, 4). Another is that, according to Casper, vernacular literature has a tendency to appear exclusively in commercial, nonliterary magazines that are not concerned with reprinting them in a more permanent form, even if some are worthy of survival.

Pangasinan literature is no different. Besides the lack of writers in the vernacular, there is also a lack of support for the *Uhupan na Pansiansia’y Salitan Pangasinan* (Association for the Preservation of the Pangasinan Language) for the implementation of projects to encourage a literary resurgence (Cardinoza 2009). According to Santiago

Villafania, the province's leading poet, with a population of about 1.3 million Pangasinan-speaking folks, Pangasinan has only three short story writers, two novelists, six poets, one essayist and only three of them have published books in the last six years. In an effort to save Pangasinan culture, Villafania has published three books of *anlong* or Pangasinan poetry: *Pinabli tan arum ni'ran Anlong* (2003), *Balikas na Caboloan* (2005), and *Malagilion: Sonnets tan Villanelles* (2007). He hopes that through his poetry written in the vernacular, he might inspire young-blooded *umaanlong* or poets to continue his work and to keep on supporting and embracing Pangasinan literature (Villafania 2005).

In this study, I analyzed 31 of Santiago Villafania's poems, all of which are from his second book, *Balikas na Caboloan*, and saw, through a close reading of the text, how he used his culture and language to reconfigure Pangasinan to be, beyond the tangible and the physical, a state of ideology called *Caboloan*.

Statement of the Problem

Santiago Villafania, an advocate for the resurgence of Pangasinan as a literary language, envisions the *anlong* tradition of Pangasinan as reinvigorated by the contemporary *umaanlong* (Villafania n.d.). By pioneering the contemporary form of *anlong* or Pangasinan poetry, he hopes to inspire new generations of *umaanlong* or Pangasinan poets and thus spark the evolution of Pangasinan language and literature.

This study analyzed all 31 poems from his second book, *Balikas na Caboloan*, and examined how he used Pangasinan culture and language to reconfigure space. Furthermore, using the New Historicist lens, this study discussed how these poems were

influenced by the historical context of the author. Specifically, the study seeks to answer these questions:

1. What are the distinct themes and characteristics of contemporary Pangasinan *anlong* as reflected in Santiago Villafania's poetry?
2. What are the social values and ideals of Pangasinan culture which the text addresses?
3. How did the author's personal history affect his literature?
4. How did the author use his own cultural influences and vernacular language for the reconfiguration of space to be more than just a physical plane (Pangasinan) but a state of ideology (Caboloan) as well?

Research Objectives

Specifically, the following objectives were addressed:

1. To identify the unique characteristics and themes of the contemporary *anlong* as reflected in Santiago Villafania's poetry
2. To describe the social values and ideals of Pangasinan culture which the text addresses
3. To distinguish the time and circumstances of the author and to establish a connection between his personal history and the written text

4. To illustrate how the author uses cultural influences, social values, ideals and the Pangasinan language for the reconfiguration of space by marking and emphasizing the said elements within the text

Significance of the Study

As was mentioned earlier in the background of the study, from earlier times up to the present, few regional literature or literature in the vernacular has been published. Some, though, such as Ilocano, Hiligaynon and others have seen rebirth in some circulations, series and even in the Palanca. However, the same can't be said about Pangasinan literature. Although some have found their way into several printing presses, very few, if any at all, have wound their way into canon and mainstream Philippine literature. Having said that, this study is beneficial because (1) it adds to the relatively scanty collection of studies on regional literature; (2) it supports Santiago Villafania's and the *Ulupan na Pansiansia'y Salitan Pangasinan* (Association for the Preservation of the Pangasinan Language)'s goal of advancing and enriching the literature of the province; (3) analyzing Villafania's works under the historical and cultural context of the province helps promote familiarity with old, forgotten traditions, beliefs and practices; and (4) it rouses the long dormant "Pangasinan pride" and thus hopefully ignite a spark among young Pangasinense writers to write. The provision of English and Filipino translations of the poems may also be seen as (5) a way of making Villafania's poetry more accessible to a wider audience, not just to those who understand Pangasinan.

One reason why there is a paucity of Pangasinan literature is due to the fact that very few choose to speak the language. Pangasinan is experiencing a deterioration, even

loss, of language due to the fact that most of the Pangasinenses fail to pass on the knowledge of the language to their young, thus resulting in a generation that prefers to either avoid conversing in Pangasinan or never properly learn how to. A fifth significance of this study is that it promotes said language. This study aids in the restoration or revitalization of the deteriorating language of the province. Just as Villafania discussed in his essay, the role of the *umaanlong* is great in that the future of a/the language rests in their hands. It is his/her job to pass on to the next generation our native tongue, so it won't die or fade (Villafania, 2006). The sixth importance of this study lies in the idea that a thesis subject/study which directly deals with analyzing innovative Pangasinan literature reinforces Villafania's philosophy of "pass[ing] on to the next generation our native tongue".

Scope and Delimitations

All of the 31 poems from Santiago Villafania's second book, *Balikas na Caboloan*, were utilized for this study. These include the following titles: "Para ed saray manangaro na salitan Pangasinan", "palsot", "skylab", "di balkesan", "bai Marina", "pinabli", "sika", "dia'd ilog Ari", "Dua'ran liriko", "ngarem na bilay", "lingaw", "Santo Tomas High School", "bales", "dia ed uma", "pito'ran haiku", "Ermita", "sikaran laoanan", "bato ed poso'y ponti", "Urduja", "ibolusion", "patanir", "iliw", "kareenan", "balikas ya anggapo'y litra", "uliran ed pigaran baley ed Pangasinan", "dia'd pagew na Cordillera", "bini", "Konbilay", "sonata cantata", "dala na tumatagaumen", and "panalagar". His second book was chosen as the material source for this study due to reasons of resource availability only. Since his poems are written in the vernacular, a

rough translation is provided by the researcher for the sake of the comprehension of readers who are not familiar with the language. The analysis, however, was based solely on the original language of the texts.

A brief history of the province was provided. This includes the etymology of the name of Pangasinan; demography, geography and social history of the province; an overview of the development of its literature; and the current literary situation. A biography of the author, Santiago “Sonny” Villafania, was also provided, in order to satisfy the third objective of this study. Since information about the social values, beliefs and mores of the province is needed to be able to analyze the text, written or published information was gathered as well as informal inquiry to local/native residents of Pangasinan. Inquiry was conducted using simple, casual conversation without the need of questionnaires.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Review of Related Literature

The history of Philippine literature goes as far back as the time before our “enlightenment.” Despite the fact that most of our written history started only when the Spaniards settled in our country in 1521, the culture of our people had been established long before the Spanish regime. This includes our oral lore or literature (Espina et. al. 2009). The discovery of the “Tabon Man” in a cave in Palawan in 1962 is one proof that our prehistory goes far back in time (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005). Through several studies, we are now acquainted with pre-colonial Philippine literature due to the collection of oral lore of Filipinos whose ancestors were able to preserve them. “These Filipinos – variously referred to as ‘natives,’ ‘ethnic minorities,’ ‘tribal Filipinos,’ etc – have been able to preserve for us epics, tales, songs, riddles and proverbs that are now our windows to a past with no written records we can study” (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005, 2). Much of our oral literature was community-bound, that is, they express experiences of and from the community and served its needs from transmission of beliefs, values, ideals, customs and mores, to entertainment (Baltasar, Erestain and Estanislao 1981). Subject matter consisted mostly of the common experiences of the people within a community such as food-gathering; creatures and objects of nature; work in the home, field, forest or sea; caring for children and others (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005). These traditional pieces of literature in a given community are images of the living conditions and practices of its people (De Guzman 2009). They were the Filipino’s vehicle for self

expression and the preservation of the culture of a nation, but more importantly, they were tools for the spread of cultural heritage. “Our literature is a statement of ourselves as a people. Examine our literary output, and see a Filipino culture... manifested in the languages we speak and write, our customs and traditions, our beliefs, our aspirations” (Vinuya, 2005).

The process of colonization and evangelization by the Spaniards proceeded swiftly during the mid 16th century until early 17th century. By then, most of the lowland communities had succumbed to Spanish sovereignty and had accepted the new faith (Baltasar, Erestain and Estanislao 1981). The parish priest was the embodiment of power among the colonized populace which is why the literature of this entire period was created under his supervision (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005). Printing presses were monopolized by religious orders and there was restriction to publishing works whose content diverged from the subject of religion. According to Lumbera (2005), the songs, riddles, proverbs and tales of the pagans made the missionaries and parish priests uneasy since some uprisings motivated by religious nativism had erupted earlier during the colonial period. As a solution, the “oral literature was ‘Christianized’ where it could not be suppressed or eradicated, but very little of it saw print” (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005, 37). Of course, this only pertains to the published works and not the new oral lore, which at the time, continued to circulate among the masses, enriching the traditional literature (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005).

The arrival of the Americans during the latter part of the 19th century signaled a new, promising era. The language of literature changed from Spanish to English and regional barriers were leveled through mass education (Baltasar, Erestain and Estanislao

1981). This, however, was a façade; a strategy employed by the Americans to colonize the country and some guerillas like Artemio Ricarte and Macario Sakay saw through this act and continued to fight against the US government. In addition, Lumera states:

Against the background of war and efforts by the colonial government to subdue resistance to US rule, Philippine literature burst forth with vitality and variety indicative of creative energy unleashed by the Revolution and propelled by the Philippine-American war. Newspapers and magazines in Spanish, English, and the vernacular languages proliferated in spite of threatening provisions of the Sedition Law providing many venues for creative writing and socio-political commentary. (Lumera and Lumera, 2005, 86)

Periodicals which used local languages proliferated all over the country and among them were *Muling Pagsilang* (Rebirth, 1903, Tagalog), *Ang Kaluwasan* (Deliverance, 1902, Cebuano), *Makinaugalingon* (Partisan to One's Own, 1913, Ilongo), *Nueva Era* (New Era, 1908, Iloko), *Liwayway* (Dawn, 1922, Tagalog), *Bisaya* (Visayan, 1930, Cebuano), *Hiligaynon* (1934, Ilongo), and *Bannawag* (Daybreak, 1934, Iloko).

During the first half of the entire period of American Occupation, the literary development was based on the “Euro-Hispanic” tradition¹ (Lumera and Lumera 2005). The writers, then, drew thoughts from the Revolution in order to encourage the Filipinos to continue the struggle for independence from the Americans and this was concretized in literature. A prominent example is Severino Reyes (1861-1942) who was among the firsts to replace the *komedya* with the Filipino adaptation of the zarzuela which keeps with the new self-image of the Filipino resulting from the struggle against colonizers (Lumera

1. “Euro-Hispanic” tradition – refers to the literary part of the cultural heritage of Spanish colonialism which brought over into Philippine writing forms, critical theory and subject matter/themes from Spanish/French literature

and Lumbera 2005). Others who followed in Reyes' footsteps were Juan Matapang Cruz (no dates available) with his drama *Hindi Aco Patay* (I Am Not Dead, 1903) and Aurelio Tolentino (1867-1915) with *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas* (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, 1903). Poetry, on the other hand, supported the nationalist theater by deriving inspiration from the content of the poems of the heroes of the Revolution but showed descent from Rizal's poetry by reflecting a new-found nostalgia for the Hispanic past that the Americanization was beginning to blur (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005). However, during the final years of the nineteenth century, the Tagalog poets "did not result in mere repetitions of patriotic matter... the best of them were enthusiastically experimenting with a variety of technical effects through innovations in meter, rime and stanza forms" (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005, 91). Among them were Pedro Gatmaitan (1889- 1965) and Jose Corazon "Batute" de Jesus (1896-1932). By the end of the period of U.S. colonialism, Americanized intellectuals being turned out by the universities contributed to the growth of English writing that at first, it seemed that it might spell doom for the Philippine literary heritage. "However, realities in Philippine society and outside pressed hard on the way writers' consciousness, and some of the best writing they turned out came to grips with those realities" (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005, 104).

After the EDSA Revolution, we saw the resurfacing of regional literature with the aim of developing written works that are multi-lingual and multi-cultural (Literal-EN n.d.). There developed a "thrust towards the retrieval and the recuperation of writing in Philippine languages other than Tagalog" (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005). Centers for creative writing and writers' organizations that regularly set up symposia on writing and workshops began to emerge. Among these organizations were UMPIL (*Unyon ng mga*

Manunulat ng Pilipino), PANULAT (*Pambansang Unyon ng mga Manunulat*), Panday Lipi (Smithy of the Race), GAT (*Galian sa Arte at Tula*), KATHA (Creative Work), LIRA (*Linangan sa Imahen, Retorika at Anyo*), GUMIL (*Gunglo Dagiti Mannurat nga Ilokano*), LUDABI (*Lubas sa Dagang Bisaya*) and PEN (Pen, Essay and Novel) (Lumebra and Lumera 2005).

Since then, however, that thrust to open up space for the flourishing of regional literature hasn't gotten far since very few regional writings have been published, much less read by the masses. Galdon states three possible reasons: (1) Nobody, except those who study and/or use Philippine vernaculars, care much about its potential as a form of media for both daily communication and durable literary works; (2) Accessibility is in question since, in the Philippines, the printed word is already an elite factor; and (3) vernacular literature tends to show up in commercial, nonliterary magazines whose concerns do not include the reprinting of these works, even if they are worthy of survival, in a more permanent form (Galdon 1980). Following the development of Philippine literature in general, the literature of Pangasinan is, in a sense, held in suspension. In Pangasinan, despite the lack, or absence, of records of written literature, the existence of legends (*uliran*), maxims (*diparan*) and riddles (*pabitla*) indicates that there was at least oral literature (Cortes 1974).

Poetry is one of the many contributions to the founding of oral literature. "These early poems are comparatively few, and most hold little literary value. Products of a formative age, they are nevertheless important as tangible evidence of the existence of an ancient Filipino culture" (Tuazon and Medina, Jr. 1974). Although there is little evidence to support the idea, poetry in Pangasinan, or at least the art of verses, may already have

been developed. This is due to the observation that early in the nineteenth century, “the ‘young men, in their *verses of love*, often likened the cheeks of their sweethearts to the color of the macalimba” (Cortez 1974). Since the form of songs and verses were among the few that were used as oral literature in the ancient past, there existed songs not only about devotion, but also for atonement of sins, ministering to the sick and burial of the dead (Tuazon and Medina, Jr. 1974).

As the arrival of the Spaniards and the colonial evangelization process began, a Dominican priest was recorded to have described the Pangasinenses as “...hostile, obstinate, barbaric – an unruly and bloody race, and above all measure opposed to the gospel since that was above all opposed to their vices, cruelties, lewdness, superstitions and idolatries” (Nelmidia-Flores 2001, 96). Centuries of Spanish colonization however, turned the Pangasinenses into a devout religious flock which can be seen in the number of churches still existing today in many towns in Pangasinan, one of which is the well-known Our Lady of Manaoag Church. Hispanization also introduced a few additions into the early forms of Pangasinan literature such as the *aligando* (Christmas carol), *gozos* (novena verses in song) and *pabasa* (reading or chanting of the *pasion*) which have taken on qualities distinctively Pangasinan (Nelmidia-Flores 2001).

Pangasinan proverbs and riddles, like their counterparts in other regions, mirror subject matter taken from the environment; reflects colonial experiences, both under Spain and America; and are didactic in nature, often emphasizing humility and honesty as key factors for progress (Nelmidia-Flores 2001). Often, they use body metaphors to convey proverbial messages. Unlike proverbs which are more serious in nature, riddles on the other hand, is primarily for the entertainment of both young and old. *Aligando*, a

corruption of the Spanish word *aguinaldo*, is the Pangasinan Christmas Carol which consists of 565 lines and is sung in two voices, usually accompanied by a guitar. The performance lasts for about two hours and the singers are invited to have supper or snacks after the performance (Nelmidia-Flores 2001).

Parayno Hermanos was the first publishing house established in Pangasinan which gave way to both Pangasinan and Iluko literature (Nelmidia-Flores 2001). Pangasinan writings were said to be threatened when the publishing house also published Iluko *awit* and *korido* as well as the *Bannawag*, the Iluko version of the Tagalog *Liwayway*, which claimed a good part of readership in the province (Nelmidia-Flores 2001). Some of the other publications were *Tonung* (1925) which was edited by the famous Pangasinan sarswelista Pablo Mejia and the *Lioaoa* Catholic publication (1921).

It was the monthly publication *Silew* (Light), by the Pangasinan Review Press, that “paved the way for the vernacular writing in Pangasinan to prosper and to be appreciated in the entire region” (Nelmidia-Flores 2001, 96). It contained *tongtong* (narratives/short stories), *anlong* (poems), *pabitla/bonikew* (riddles), *diparan* (proverbs) and others. *Silew*, which also circulated in Ilocos, was frequented by well-known writers and professionals such as Maria Magsano, Jose Mejia, Juan Santos, Daniel Maramba, Gualberto de Venecia, M.D., and Jose Zulueta among others (Nelmidia-Flores 2001). It only lasted for 9 years, from June 1934 to November 1943. Five years later, however, it was followed by *Sandi’y Silew* (In Lieu of *Silew*) which published story writers such as Leonarda Carrera, Nena Mata, Francisco Rosario and Juan Villamil (Nelmidia-Flores 2001). It brought back the spirit of the earlier *Silew* as a special section in the weekly newspaper, Pangasinan Courier. It was the only section written in the vernacular while

the rest were in English. Pangasinan Courier thrived for several decades before it was forced to shut down after the devastation of the July 1990 earthquake, which buried the entire city of Dagupan and nearby towns several feet below street level (Nelmidia-Flores 2001).

Since then, Pangasinan has produced very few writers (three short story writers, two novelists, six poets, one essayist) and written works (only about 6 published books in the last decade).

Awit ng Pagdadalamhati: Isang Deskriptib at Historikal na Pag-aaral sa Cantores ng Pangasinan, a study conducted by De Guzman (2009), tried to delve into the realm of ancient songs in Pangasinan, specifically the *cantores* – a prayer offered for dead loved ones. She showed the rich history and culture of Pangasinan through close inspection of its practice that, today, is not as widespread as before. Using Historicism, her study revealed that this tradition is related to the long history of colonization of our nation under the Spaniards. It also shows how the continuous practice of the *cantores* keeps alive different beliefs and practices that were otherwise long forgotten. The only thing her study and mine have in common is the fact that we look back into the roots of a literature in order to make sense of it. This is relevant because it is an undeniable fact that literary texts, any kind of literary text, are “a point of entry into the historical world. ... Their existence as artifacts is unavoidably permeated, determined, or compromised by history” (Mojares 2003).

Dulawan (2005), in her Master’s thesis, *Imahen ng Babae sa mga Popular na Awiting Pangasinan*, looked into and translated popular Pangasinan songs and used

Feminism to study images of women: how they are represented and/or viewed. Dulawan found out that even though most were men lyricists, even the women write songs depicting themselves in the same manner that society views them. These popular songs depicted stereotypical views about women and only 10% go against these stereotypes. Another study similar in thought, *Manggiwgiw-giw: Ang Imahen ng Babae sa Likod ng mga Titik ng Popular na Awitin ni Insiyong* by Aboy (2008), conducted on contemporary Pangasinan songs looked into the works of a musical icon of Pangasinan, Raul “Insiyong” Tamayo, through a feministic lens. Insiyong is popular for his composition and performance of novelty songs written in the Pangasinan language. Using feminist criticism, Aboy came to the same conclusion as Dulawan: women are degraded in Insiyong’s songs and his techniques downplayed the direct derogation of the female. Both studies by Dulawan and Aboy are on the same wavelength as mine in that we agree on one thing: songs (and that is to say poetry, as well) reveal the different kinds of reality that we imbibe from the lyrics; just as in the popular songs of Insiyong, Villafania’s poetry enables us to look into the everyday lives and happenings or real-life situations of the Pangasinenses.

On the other hand, Resultay and Resultay (2007) in their study, *The Extent of Use of the Pangasinan Language Among Students in Higher Education Institutions in Dagupan City*, explored the issue of language loss or deterioration in Pangasinan. Their study showed that the extent of use of Pangasinan is declining due to the infrequent use of said language. They enumerated a number of reasons why this is so: (1) parents don’t teach their children; (2) intermarriages by Pangasinenses to other regional groups; (3) promotion of English as the medium of instruction in schools; (4) surge of migrants from

neighboring provinces; (5) influence of media and technology; and (6) the lack of strong or evident language policies by the Philippine government geared towards the promotion, preservation and propagation of Pangasinan and other indigenous languages. This study is related to mine in the effect that it shows just how much the Pangasinan language is dwindling. The issue of language is important with regards to literature because it can be seen as one of the reasons why few publications/books/magazines are being distributed to the public. The lesser the speakers of a language means the lesser the publication of works in that same language. This philosophy explains why there had been very few Pangasinan literature published in the last decade.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Two of the contemporary forms of **historicism** is **new historicism** and **cultural materialism**, the former being the focal point of this study. However, it is only fitting to first, reveal the basic foundations of historicism.

Strictly speaking, historicist criticism of literature and culture “explores how the meaning of a text, idea or artifact is produced by way of its relation to the wider historical context in which it is created or experienced” (Malpas and Wake 2006, 55). Therefore, meaning, for historicism, is determined by and through history. It [meaning] is not eternal or universal but something that emerges from “the language, belief, practices, institutions and desires of particular historically located cultures” (Malpas and Wake 2006, 55).

The rise of **historicism** is due to the convergences of literary interpretation and historical explanation demanded by the particular modes of expression of different nations at different times (Hamilton 2003). It is a critical movement which insists on and

gives priority to the importance of historical context to the interpretation of all texts. First, it concerns itself in situating any statement – philosophical, historical, aesthetic, etc. – in its historical context. Then, it doubles back on itself to delve into the extent by which any historical text inevitably reflects the interests and bias of the period whence it was written (Hamilton 2003). Paul Hamilton, here, states that nothing means in isolation: one can't simply take a text or idea and remove it out of its context so as to claim that it has and always will mean 'this' in and of itself (Malpas and Wake 2006). A text is always related to something bigger than itself, such as the cultural, political, social and other aspects of its context. The second characteristic, on the other hand, is a development from the first which shows the complexity of historicist practice. "Our own processes of reading and understanding also take place in a particular historical context, which is tied up with its own social economic and political pressures and investments" (Malpas and Wake 2006, 58). Historicists can't simply detach themselves, stand outside and be a "spectator" of a text because their own readings take place in a contemporary culture which produce assumptions that are worthy of question (Malpas and Wake 2006). In other words, historicists also see what those meanings may come to mean today, whether it changes or remains the same given an adjustment of context. The projection of the past is not to assume a sentimental forgetfulness of modernity, rather, this is done to credit past symbolic practices with meanings which translated, would have significance now (Hamilton 2003).

As already stated, one of the two "key contemporary forms of historicism", as Simon Malpas stated it, is **new historicism** which is the main theory that will be employed in this study. New historicism, which is also known as cultural poetics,

emerged towards the end of the 1970s also as a reaction to the ahistorical approach of **new criticism**. In a nutshell, new criticism concerns itself only with the text's production of meaning through its use of imagery, metaphor, and so on. It views or studies a text in itself, separate from its political or social context. In contrast to this, Malpas states:

...new historicism insists that texts are part of the everyday, are firmly embedded in the institutions and power relations of general culture, that there is no separate realm of poetic utterance, and that such formal isolation drains literature and culture of any political or social importance. (Malpas and Wake 2006, 60)

New historicism is very unlike new criticism in that the interpretation or value of the text does not rely on the autonomy of the text nor can the text be studied in isolation, without regard to the historical conditions in which it was produced and the life of the author as well (Kakkuzhi-Maliakkal 2010). It is this very reason, its refreshing diversion from the stringent textualist ideology and untheoretical paradigm dominant in the heyday of new criticism, that this theory gained immediate interest from scholars (Pieters 2000). Embraced by many, a number of critical corpora were published from 1985 onwards which include practical pieces incorporating a new historical reading or method as well as basis of new historicism (Pieters 2000). The latter was meant to contribute to the ongoing elaboration of the method. Despite the increase in critical attention, it had taken years before the first book-length monograph on new historicism appeared in 1997 (Pieters 2000).

Spearheaded by Stephen Greenblatt, the new historical critical theory has drawn many influences from a variety of theories. These included reader-response theory, poststructuralist theories [from 1970s including those of Derrida, de Certeau, Barthes and

so on] and feminist and Marxist theories. Other recognized critics in this field include Richard Helgerson, Stephen Orgle, Alan Liu and Catherine Gallagher (Switzer n.d.). One of the greater influences of the theory is the philosophical writings of Michel Foucault, whose intertextual methods were used to focus on issues of power and knowledge (Siegel n.d.). New historicists have drawn three key premises from Foucault's writing: "(1) the idea that history is discontinuous, (2) the argument that a given period is better understood as a site of conflict between competing interests and discourses than as a unified whole, and (3) the redefinition of the role and function of power" (Malpas and Wake 2006, 60). Foucault rejects the idea that "history marks a single continuous progress or development" and sees it as a discontinuity which is made up different series that overlap and intersect without one being able to reduce them into a linear schema (Malpas and Wake 2006). He argues that it is not right to reduce the ideas and practices of a particular moment to "a single unifying vision" (Malpas and Wake 2006, 60). This simply means that a new historical analysis of a text avoids sweeping generalizations and takes notice of apparently insignificant details and sees how these "breaks" or "gaps" may have importance. Foucault's analysis of power is perhaps the most important contributions to contemporary theories, and is essential to both new historicism and cultural materialism. He argues that "power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations" (Malpas and Wake 2006, 61). In other words, power is not a hegemony. It is not something imposed by a higher class of society to those below them. Rather, it "is at work in all interactions,

conflicts and communications” (Malpas and Wake 2006, 60). By this, Foucault means that power exists in everything that takes place within society.

The immediate effect, then, for new historicism’s analysis of literature and culture of Foucault’s idea of history as a discontinuous process of conflict is as Greenblatt puts it: “the work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class or creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society” (Bertens 2001, 176). In other words, art and/or literature don’t merely reflect the ideas and beliefs of a society in a disinterested manner; “they are shaped by them and are actively involved in sustaining or challenging them” (Malpas and Wake 2006, 61). Malpas (2006) then states that three specific consequences arise from this approach: (1) new historicism’s rejection of the idea of authorial genius; (2) its disruption of established canons of great works; and (3) the ways in which literary and non-literary texts are related to each other. The first argument rejects the idea that the creation of a work of art or literature is solely due to an individual’s creative and artistic genius. The author or artist doesn’t create the work entirely from his own imagination, but “employs the ideas, vocabularies and beliefs of her or his culture to produce a work which that culture can understand” (Malpas and Wake 2006, 61). This doesn’t mean that the author or artist isn’t creative or has no imagination, but rather, we view his or her creation of art or literature not as a mystical force belonging to a genius but as a function of the circulation of social discourses in which the artist or author is deeply embedded, just as any other person (Malpas and Wake 2006). The second consequence is that the canon, or the established list of great works depicted as universal, and authors long treated as canonical are challenged and are opened up to include other works by authors

that have been otherwise ignored (Malpas and Wake 2006). Since then, literary and art studies have expanded to include a more vast range of texts. The third consequence questions and explores the relationship between literary and non-literary texts. In new historicism, non-literary or non-artistic texts are treated not just as factual background for a reading of literature but are treated as text as well: the critic analyzes non-literary documents such as diaries or letters in the same attention that he or she employs with literature (Malpas and Wake 2006).

Nevertheless, two of the pioneers or “experts” in new historicism tells us of the malleable structure of the practice of said theory:

..what we knew above all was that it (or perhaps we) resisted systematization. We had never formulated a set of theoretical propositions or articulated a program; we had not drawn for ourselves, let alone for anyone else, a sequence of questions that always needed to be posed when encountering a work of literature in order to construct a new historicist reading; we would not be able to say to someone in haughty disapproval, ‘You are not an authentic New Historicist.’ The notion of authenticity seemed and continues to seem misplaced, for new historicism is not a coherent, close-knit school in which one might be enrolled or from which one might be expelled. (Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000)

Gallagher and Greenblatt are simply referring to the fact that the methods, in so much as they can be called methodological, of new historical criticism is not as concrete as other critical theories. Some critics would even charge the nature of new historicism with simply being anecdotal, in that, it appears to be able to move freely and arbitrarily, but they’re missing the point because the anecdotal, by forging links between texts, becomes a means by which those ideas and voices excluded by the dominant ideologies can be traced and analyzed (Malpas and Wake 2006).

Despite the incoherence of this school of thought, however, we can more or less surmise core concepts by which we can follow in the analysis of a text. The methods of new historical criticism are anthropological rather than literary critical or historical. New historicist criticism is indebted to anthropologist Clifford Geertz because of his method of “thick description” wherein one analyzes by way of detailed and minutely observed social and cultural practices (Bertens 2001). Following this methodology, this study will also observe and analyze the social and cultural practices of the Pangasinan culture that can be explored in anecdotes from history and see how these are related or contradictory to the text. On a more detailed note, the following critical strategies developed by Fish (1999) provides us with an idea of some of the concerns when assessing the significance of a literary text through the New Historicist lens: (1) the critic should begin by describing the values, ideals and points-of-view in the literary text which encompasses the expression of the poetics of culture, or the relationship of the text and the sociohistorical context of that historical time; (2) the critic must reflect on how the circumstances of a writer’s life may have influenced the text; and (3) the critic must mark and emphasize social rules, codes or mores articulated within the text. These are the core concepts and steps that will be used in the analysis of Villafania’s poetry.

What is “history in the text?”

Resil Mojares in his article “The History in the Text” states that any kind of literary texts are “a point of entry into the historical world. ... Their existence as artifacts is unavoidably permeated, determined, or compromised by history” (Mojares 2003). This doesn’t mean, however, that a text is categorized as historical literature. Rather, a text is

historical in the sense that, (1) they are told within a certain historical consciousness; (2) history is produced in the totality of a text, when events are bound by a specific time and place; (3) likely, history is what the text represses, meaning a text may draw from historically-specific time, place, or subjectivity without it being explicitly stated in the content; and (4) the text talks not about empirical or objective events such as wars or revolutions, but instead, it talks about common, everyday life nevertheless marked by hidden ideas, emotions and/or consciousness (Reyes, et. al., 2010). It is necessary to point this out due to the fact that the texts (i.e. Villafania's poetry) are primarily not "historical literature." In fact, they are more of a semi-autobiography than anything else, but they do exist within and are drawn from a certain historical consciousness, which this study is trying to reveal.

History vs. Historicity

The girl gingerly picked up the two lighters and examined them.

"Don't you feel it?" he kidded her. "The historicity?"

She said, "What is historicity?"

"When a thing has history in it. Listen, one of those lighters was in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's pocket when he was assassinated. And one wasn't. One has historcity, a hell of a lot of it."

- Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*

While history is defined in Encarta Dictionary as "past events of a period of time or in the life or development of a people, an institution or a place," historicity, on the other hand is the state of being a part of history. **Historicity** provides us with proof whether or not a text, a person, or an event is "historically authentic." Again, reiterating

the point given in the preceding subheading, Villafania's poetry has historicity in that it is a part of and is molded by its sociohistorical context.

Self-Fashioning

A term introduced by Stephen Greenblatt, **Self-fashioning** is used to describe the process of constructing one's identity and public persona to a set of socially acceptable standards. It "ultimately subscribes to the poststructuralist notion that the self is always a construction, that our identity is never given, but always the product of an interaction between the way we want to represent ourselves – through the stories we tell and our actual presentations – and the power relations we are part of" (Bertens 2001, 179). Greenblatt describes how it works in the Renaissance era when the upper-class practiced self-fashioning by creating prescribed attires and behavior and was represented by a portrait. These portraits constructed the ideological trait of masculinity, power and authority.

Similarly, self-fashioning was practiced by the Tenth Muses or published women authors during the seventeenth century due to the fact that writing was taboo for women at the time (Garnett, n.d.). They were hard-pressed at creating for themselves an image that will somehow explain their occupation. However, they achieved this through direct and indirect means, such as directly addressing the audience and offering them biographical accounts which justifies their passion for writing, or, for others, reconfiguring patriarchal norms to create space for the championing of women (Garnett, n.d.).

In Luciani's (2004) discussion of the self-fashioning in Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz' works, he shows how Sor Juana had created and cultivated a literary identity:

By adding the modifier 'literary' to the term 'self-fashioning,' my intent is not only to recognize the obvious fact that Sor Juana created a 'self' through the medium of literature, but she also continually – even obsessively – thematicized the literary act, in reference to herself, in her works. I refer here to such things as self-portraits in the act of writing or reading, the metaphorization of her body and the overall reification of tropes in reference to the self, meta-theatrical and self-referential interpolations in her theater, the mystification and demystification of her poetic calling, self-inscription within gender-bound literary traditions, and meditations of her own literary fame. (Luciani 2004)

This study will try to reveal how Villafania uses self-fashioning in his poetry and what reconfigurations, if any, were done. However, instead of looking for a literary identity that may or may not have been created in Villafania's poems, we will establish how his *fashioning* of words, language and culture reconfigured physical space to state of ideology (i.e. Pangasinan to Caboloan).

To summarize, new historicism is one of the two contemporary forms of historicism that insists on the idea that texts are firmly embedded in the institutions of the society and that isolation drains literature and culture of any social or political importance. It rejects the idea of the author as a genius and it moves away from the established canons of great works and/or authors, taking notice of "lesser writings" that have otherwise been ignored or considered "unimportant". It also focuses on the relationship of literary and non-literary texts, analyzing both with similar attention and approaches. The anthropological methodology of new historicism follows three basic steps: (1) describing the social and cultural values, beliefs and practices of the given

culture and seeing how it relates to or contradicts with what the text addresses; (2) reflecting on how the circumstances of the writer's life may have influenced the text; and (3) marking and emphasizing social rules, codes or mores articulated within the text. These steps, as well as the concept of *fashioning* which Villafania employs in order to create a state of ideology that is Caboloan, will be taken in order to analyze the value of his poetry.

Definition of Terms

historicism – a literary critical theory that explores the meaning/s of a text through its relation to the historical context in which it was created or experienced (Malpas and Wake 2006).

new historicism – a literary critical theory that interprets the value of a text through the historical conditions in which it was produced and the life of the author as well (Kakkuzhi-Maliakkal 2010).

historicity – the state of being a part of history; provides proof of whether or not a text is ‘historically authentic.’

self-fashioning – or *fashioning*, describes the process of constructing one’s identity.

Pangasinan – referred to, in this study, in two ways: as the name of the province and also as the language spoken along the central parts of said province. People often confuse the name of the language as ‘*Pangalatok*,’ which is in fact demeaning and derogatory since it was originally coined after the phrase “*Pangasinense sira tuktok*” (Pasyalan.net 2006).

Pangasinense – refers to the people living in Pangasinan.

Caboloan – refers to the old name of a region of the Pangasinan province, due to the abundance of the bolo. However, when the Spaniards came, they applied the name Pangasinan to the whole place, causing the name Caboloan to be gradually abandoned (Cortes 1974).

anlong – means poetry in Pangasinan

umaanlong – means poet or writer of poetry in Pangasinan

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The texts were evaluated using new historical criticism and content analysis. A brief background on the history and cultural practices of Pangasinan is given as it is important in providing a historical and social context needed for the interpretation and/or analysis of the texts. Furthermore, the interview conducted with the author of the poems, Santiago Villafania, proved beneficial in the illumination of parts of the texts. It is likewise an important source of information for the analysis of the text.

In analyzing the texts, the researcher covered the following: (1) identified the unique themes and characteristics of the contemporary *anlong* as reflected by Villafania's poetry; (2) described some social values and cultural practices that were addressed by the texts; (3) established a connection between the author's personal history and the history within the text; and (4) illustrated how all of these factors are *fashioned* and have come together to reconfigure a physical plane that is Pangasinan to an ideological state that is Caboloan. Four predominant themes were distinguished: (1) belief, both Christian and folk; (2) romance; (3) cult of nature or bucolic; and (4) linguistic and social struggle. The characteristics of the poems, on the other hand, were analyzed in terms of the use of didacticism in the texts, which was a prevalent technique employed by previous Pangasinan writers.

The poems, which are written in the vernacular Pangasinan, were translated by the researcher with some help from the following: Remedios Tecson, a local resident of Mangaldan, Pangasinan; Erma Tibig, also a local resident of Mangaldan, Pangasinan; and Santiago Villafania, himself. The translation is important as it enlightens non Pangasinan-

speaking readers/audiences and it also gives basis, albeit minimal, for a critical interpretation of the text. I say minimal since the analysis of the poems will largely be based on the original language of the texts.

The researcher was careful in analyzing the text so as not to bring out biases although the study, with regard to tenets of New Historicism, also recognizes that the researcher's views will inadvertently influence the outcome of the interpretation.

Data Gathering

The 31 Pangasinan poems by Santiago Villafania included in his second published book, *Balikas na Caboloan* will comprise the body of text for study. Since this study is anchored on history, a formal interview is needed to be done in order to produce data about the personal history of the author, which may give additional interpretations of the texts. Interview or questionnaire may be employed to retrieve background information or biographical information about the author and to retrieve data about the social values, ideal, beliefs and mores of the Pangasinense. As such, personal contact is needed to be established between the research and the author, Santiago Villafania, as source of first hand information, as well as local residents of Pangasinan. Interview with the local Pangasinenses will be done in a casual, informal conversational style. The transcription of the interviews is located in Appendix A.

The poems, written in Pangasinan, were translated into Filipino and English (see Appendix B). It was translated into two other languages (i.e. Filipino and English) instead of just English because the researcher felt that by translating to English alone, most of the

nuances of the language was lost. By retaining the Filipino translation, some of the nuances were also retained, though not all.

Data Analysis

Content analysis will be employed on the text itself to be able to identify “textual traces” of values, codes and mores embedded within the text, as well as to identify how self-fashioning and/or reconfiguration of space is exercised within the text. Ultimately, the final analysis of the text does not rely on content analysis alone but also on the consideration of the external, cultural factors. Also, the result of the interviews will serve as a guide in the interpretation of the text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

About Pangasinan

Pangasinan is one of the biggest and oldest provinces in the Philippines (Sanchez 2005). The term *pangasinan*, from the root word *asin* meaning salt, translates to “land of salt” or “place where salt is made” (Cortes 1974, 1). It refers to a province at the northern end of the Central Luzon plain that is lying on the western coast and is south of the Ilocos region. Pangasinan was named so due to the common occupation of the people in the coastal areas which was, and still is, salt making. Salt making is also done along the coastal towns in the Ilocos region and Manila Bay but the salt from Pangasinan is more highly prized due to its finer quality, thus earning its reputation as the ‘place of salt’ (Cortes 1974).

The term Pangasinan also refers to the language spoken along the central part in such towns as Alaminos, Mabini, Sual, Labrador, Lingayen, Bugallon, Aguilar, Mangatarem, Urbiztondo, Binmaley, Dagupan, Calasiao, Sta. Barbara, Basista, Bayambang, Malasiqui, San Fabian, Mangaldan, San Jacinto, Pozzorubio and Mapandan. The other towns in the western part of the province such as Anda, Bani, Agno, Burgos, Dasol and Infanta are predominantly Ilocano (Sanchez 2005).

The other, less popular name of the region is *Caboloan*. Its root word, *bolo*, in the Pangasinan language, refers to a species of bamboo. This special kind of bamboo is unlike the *kawayan* in that it does not grow everywhere and is highly useful in making baskets, *sawali* and *bilao* due to its thinness and lightness adaptable to weaving (Cortes 1974). Now a rarity in populated areas, the bolo was highly abundant in the inland plains

during the sixteenth century. At present, however, it can only be found in areas near the mountains such as Mangatarem (Cortes 1974).

In her book, *Pangasinan 1572-1800*, Cortes relates how, after the Spanish took over, the name Pangasinan was retained:

Before the Spanish conquest, the name *Pangasinan* applied only to the coastal areas, where salt was made, and *Caboloan* was the more common name applied to the interior plains where the bolo was abundant. At the time of the Spanish conquest, it was the coastal salt-making region that was occupied first by the Spaniards and they later applied the name Pangasinan to the whole place populated by the same language group (Cortes 1974).

Consequently, the name *Caboloan* was gradually abandoned, more so after the almost extinction of the *bolo* itself.

Balikas na Caboloan

A poet's autobiography is his poetry. Anything else is just a footnote.

- Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *The Sole Survivor*

Balikas na Caboloan is a “semi-biographical” poetry book that is part of a larger collection entitled *Pinabli tan arum ni’ran Anlong*, both of which were authored by Santiago Villafania.

Santiago “Sonny” Bergantinos Villafania is a multi-awarded Pangasinan poet born January 31, 1971 in Tuliao, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Pangasinan in 1991. He is currently based in Dasmariñas, Cavite as an adjunct faculty member at Emilio Aguinaldo College. His religious views include folk Catholicism and Pantheism (Villafania 2010).

Villafania is an advocate of the resurgence of Pangasinan as a literary language. His poems serve as a means of encouragement for new and future generations of Pangasinense writers to continue supporting their mother tongue. This is why he had been awarded the Writer of the Year (2004) by the *Ulupan na Pansiansia'y Salitan Pangasinan* (Association for the Preservation of the Pangasinan language) and Award of Merit (2005) by the Association of Writers and Authors for Regional Development (Region I) for his first book, *Pinabli tan arum ni'ran Anlong* published in 2003. Villafania is also one of 11 outstanding Pangasinenses and recipient of the 1st Asna Award (for Arts and Culture) during the first ever *Agew na Pangasinan*.

“Rich in nostalgia and historical memory, Villafania as the modern day anacbanua writer configures the provincial Pangasinan from the point of view of the native literati” (Nelmidia-Flores 2005, 7). *Balikas na Caboloan* covers the “existentialist moorings of a young, impetuous provinciano from his childhood days to his virile adult years” (Nelmidia-Flores 2005, 7). This selection consists of different types of poems: *pangermen* (elegy), *liriko* (lyric poetry), *pastoral* (bucolic), *sonito* (sonnet), *dangoan* (song), *talurtur a naratibo* (narrative verse) and *talurtur a libri* (free verse).

The poems in *Balikas na Caboloan* have four predominant themes that paint a clear, distinct picture of Pangasinan culture: (1) beliefs, both Christian and indigenous; (2) romance; (3) cult of nature/bucolic; and (4) linguistic and social struggle. It is important to point these out because these themes are the exemplification of what makes these *anlongs* distinctly Pangasinan.

Pangasinan is known as the land of miracles due to its main pilgrimage centers such as the 400-year-old Saint Dominic de Guzman Parish Church in San Carlos City, the

miraculous Shrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Divine Treasure *Senor Divino Tesoro* in Calasiao, and the most reputable pilgrimage capital of Northern Luzon which is the Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag (Museum of Learning, n.d.). As much as other parts of the Philippine islands, Pangasinan was also a target of the evangelization process by the Spaniards, which started in 1572 led by Augustinian missionaries. However, unlike the Tagalogs, the missionaries had a hard time converting the Pangasinense natives to Christianity. The missionaries eventually withdrew in 1591 because they were “disheartened by the active hostility of the natives especially because elsewhere other missionaries were enjoying signal gains in winning new converts,” particularly the Tagalos and Pampangos (Cortes 1974, 71). The missionaries blamed their hard-heartedness to the devil, but this hostility of the natives was more likely developed from frequent forays upon them for gold by the Spanish soldiers (Cortes 1974). However, after years of trying to make converts out of the natives, the missionaries’ patience and sacrifice finally won. The natives were drawn to the fasts and acts of devotion performed by the missionaries, as well as their knowledge of medicine (Cortes 1974). Christianization did have its modifying effects on rituals and practices by the natives but it’s generally accepted that what was practiced by the bulk of Christianized natives, including the Pangasinenses, was “a kind of folk Christianity that blended significant elements of their ancient practices into the new religion” (Cortes 1974, 75). The reason perhaps is due to the fact that many customs in the indigenous religion has much in common with the new. “For instance, the Christian concept of a loving and all-powerful God would not be strange to the natives who believed in an Ama-Kaoley or Father-who-takes-care-of-all-things” (Cortes 1974, 76). Furthermore, the veneration of saints is not

strange to them as they also worship *anitos* and/or spirits of their ancestors, whom they believe possess “physical components of the environment such as rivers, stones, trees, mountains, etc” (Queñano 2000, 38). Therefore, although it is undeniable that Christianity left a deep imprint on the people’s culture, it “failed to totally supplant their ancient practices” (Cortes 1974, 78).

Similarly, we are able to find traces of folk Christianity or a mixture of indigenous beliefs with the “new” religion in Villafania’s poetry, reflecting the Pangasinenses spiritual beliefs then and now. It is also noteworthy that Villafania’s religious views is that of folk Christianity and Pantheism (see Appendix A), having been raised Catholic and has, eventually, become aware of and concerned with “Nature” due to the growing ecological awareness.

Ibolusion or *Evolution* is one of his poems that, despite its title, depicts belief of Christianity. Here, he combines the fundamental concepts of opposing beliefs, creationism and evolution, into one. At the beginning of the poem, we find the narrator feeling confusion over universal concepts due to the emergence of theories of science and creationism:

Engas ak ya manletletaw	I am breath suffocating
Ed birbo tan dagem	In the universe and the wind
Sakbay a linmesa	When emerged
So syensia tan manamalsa	Science and the creator

Then, he proceeds to state how he evolved from being a breath of life from the shores of Avernus¹ to building a civilization. Despite this, however, the narrator ends the

1. Avernus - Latin, literature. "the descent of Avernus..." ["Aeneid," VI.126], in reference to Avernus, a reputed entrance to the underworld (Villafania 2010)

poem by saying that he hopes to live forevermore and that his faith that heaven exists is strong despite him being just made from ashes. This poem portrays a rebuff of the principles of evolution. The idea of heaven and immortality (that is, life after death) are concepts familiar to the teachings of Christianity. However, these ideas are similarly familiar to the indigenous belief, who also believes in the spirits of ancestors. This is an example of how ancient practices and the new religion has “creed[s] that [were] not incompatible” (Cortes 1974, 76). As we go further, we will see that the lines between the two belief systems begin to blur, eventually combining the old, although not completely, with the new.

The second one, *Kareenan (dua’ran salming na bilonget)* or *Silence (two mirrors of darkness)*, is a short, two-stanza poem that talks about the beginning and end of existence. In the first stanza, the narrator states how God created light, land and mankind. The second proceeds on stating how when God switches off the “light,” mankind will return to dust back to where he came from. Again, these are teachings of Christianity, found in the Bible. Just as Genesis 1:2 states: “Now the earth proved to be formless and waste and there was darkness...” Then, God created light, to shine upon mankind. The idea of mankind returning to dust is also a teaching from the Bible. The darkness being referred to here is the blackness of death and oblivion. However, despite the heavy reference to Bible teachings, this poem evokes a mysterious and rather gloomy tone. “Silence” and “darkness,” which are two concepts repeated twice in the poem, is often associated with the unknown. Thus, the narrator is evoking a feeling of uncertainty since he is unsure of what comes before or after his existence. There is only silence and darkness.

The third poem, on the other hand, steers away from seriousness and drifts farther away from the grip of Christianity. *Bai Marina* or *Grandma Marina* is a direct satire of the six o'clock evening prayer, which is a Catholic tradition. The poem is a narrative which talks of the persona's grandmother who is a devout Catholic and who recites a "never-ending Our Father and Ave Maria" every six o'clock in the evening using a rosary, which has already faded due to over-use. And while she prays, the rice being cooked is already burning, the fish in the basin is still unwashed, and the laundry is still hanged outside on the clothes' line because his older sister is in the neighbor's house, having her head lice removed. Then, because of the persona's hunger, he asks his grandmother to stop praying already in a way that is almost blasphemous:

Duga pa latan bai duga la	Stop that grandma stop that
Naksel la so kamarerua yo'd dasal	Your soul's already full with prayer
Nia kami balet ay	But here we are
Amputiputi la'y busaleg	Going pale in the lips
Manmulmulagat la'd eras	Wide-eyed due to hunger
Pialagar mi'y ibaga yo'y	Waiting for you to say
<i>Dia'd ngara'y ama. . .</i>	<i>In the name of the father. . .</i>
<i>Dia'd ngara'y anak. . .</i>	<i>In the name of the son. . .</i>
<i>Tan ispirito santo. . .</i>	<i>and of the holy spirit. . .</i>
Mangan iti la!	Let's eat!

At this point, the poem has stripped any pretense at tolerating such rituals or traditions associated with Christianity or Catholicism. It reflects how young ones or adolescents nowadays view this kind of tradition as tedious and unnecessary. Thus, it exemplifies the gradual shedding of old Christian traditions. Furthermore, the text also satirizes the religious fanaticism being shown by most elderly Christians, not just in Pangasinan but in other regions. A religious fanatic can be describes as someone who is "convinced that

just believing in God and living a moral life is simply not enough.... The fanatic feels compelled to engage in behaviors that demonstrate his faith. He believes that the magnitude of those behaviors must be commensurate with the strength of his faith” (Gruenfeld 2001). In the text, we see a sort of fanaticism being displayed by the persona’s grandmother, who feels the need to pray lengthy prayers promptly every six o’clock in the evening, and ignoring all other things (e.g. the rice left burning on the stove, her grandchildren left famished). It may be said that she is simply faithful to her beliefs but the description of the rosary, which is already “*masilesileng tan pinmuti la ed kabeemben* (already shiny and faded due to over-use)” shows that the act of praying is already routinized. The spiritual appeal of this kind of act of praying is already diminished due to its repetitive, almost mindless nature. Therefore, we also see in this text the decay of ‘true’ or ‘real’ Christian faith and the rendering of religion as ‘irrelevant.’

The next poem is not as humorous as the last but it also portrays a refusal to bow down to Roman saints and is also a direct inference to Villafania’s goal as a vernacular writer: reminding the younger generations of the rich pre-Hispanic traditions of the Pangasinense that has been forgotten or ignored due to the onslaught of Christianity. *Bales* or *Revenge* is about the poem’s persona who gives a monologue speech to his ancestors, saying that he doesn’t know much about them, especially the fact of how they could exchange their beloved land for “Spanish blood” and “bow down to Roman saints / made of wood or stone” and in the process, have forgotten about previous gods. But then he proceeds to say that he will become the voice that will “track the road / leading to

[their] origin” so that he will be able to keep on reminding those after him of the land’s previous glory until he dies:

Bosis ak met a mangablit
Ed kanonotan da’ra’y balon umaanlong
A singa ipangablit yo’d kanonotan
Bosis ak met ya mangistorbo ed sikara
A singa impangistorbo yo’d kugip ko
Dia ed kaaralema’y labi. . .

I’m also a voice that will poke at
The minds of the new poets
Like the way you poked my mind
I’m also a voice that’ll disturb them
Like the way you disturbed my
dreams
In the middle of the night. . .

Bales / Revenge shows the blurring of the line between Christianity and folk belief. This is, perhaps, an exemplification of the phase when the author became aware of his surroundings, leaving behind Catholicism and embracing folk Christianity (see Appendix A). In the process, we readers are shown the motivation behind why he *fashions* these beliefs and other themes that will be shown later on, in order to create a state of ideology that will serve as the *silew* (light) for next generation poets.

Indigenous beliefs of the Pangasinenses included superstitions and use of *anting-anting* or charms and talismans. “The missionaries reported that ‘they wore bracelets, like blessed objects that the *aniteras* (priestesses) gave them, with threat of death if these were removed’” (Cortes 1974, 38). The extensive use of charms was of various natures, from warding off evil spirits to bringing good luck to its wearer (Sanchez 2005). The superstitious beliefs of the natives triggered their use of amulets. According to Fray Juan Francisco de San Antonio, the ancient Pangasinenses believed that when it rained while the sun was still shining, and the sky was somewhat reddening, the *anitos* or local gods were uniting to cast spells on them (Jovellanos 2004). Other superstitions that Pangasinenses believe in until now is that when a cat rubs its face with its paw or when a

lizard produces a sound near the door or stairs, some visitors are sure to come or that dreaming that a tooth has been removed means that a near relative would soon die (Jovellanos 2004). So, the use of amulets served to counter these superstitions. “They are made of antique metal, of ancient wood, horns or the teeth of strange animals. (Jovellanos 2004)” Modern Pangasinenses, on the other hand, uses bullets of any caliber or garlic and salt as amulets to ward off evil spirits or to ward off the *manggagamud* or witch (Jovellanos 2004). Mention of *anting-anting*, superstitions and belief in spirits can be seen in some of Villafania’s poetry. However, just as much as it was in the poems that mentioned Christian practices, Villafania does not completely favor the indigenous belief over Christianity, but rather a combination of both.

Two poems that talk of *anting-antings* are *bato ed poso’y ponti* (stone in the heart of the banana tree) and *di balkesan*¹ (strong). The first has two parts and part one talks of the child persona which recounts how his grandmother told them of the story of their grandfather who died long ago and who possessed an anting-anting. It was said that because of his special powers, he reigned in their town and was hated by robbers and other people who wore amulets. One of his special talents gained from wearing the *anting-anting*, the grandmother fondly recounts, was this:

Anabat tan akipustaan
Ed managlako’y agamang
Say kuan to
Bayaran to so kantidar
Na samplatyadon agamang

He confronted and betted with
That vendor of shrimp paste
He said
He will pay the price
Of one platter of shrimp paste

-
1. *di balkesan* – literally translated as “wearing a belt,” this expression is usually meant by the elders to mean “strong”

No ag to naupot ya kanen	If he can't finish eating it
Bang balet no naupot	But if he does finish it
Ag manbayar ni ultimo sintimo	He won't pay a single cent
Tan sinimot to kono	And they say he finished it all
Dia'd pigaran minuto	In just a few minutes
A singa labat angan na deremen	Like he's just eating <i>pinipig</i>
Tinmaynan ya anggapo'y oala	Then he left like nothing happened
Say managlako akanganga	The vendor's jaw dropped

Part two of the poem shows how the child persona, with his cousin, went through the banana trees early in the dawn to look for a tree that has a heart. Then, when the persona's female cousin finally found one, she looked up at the heart, closed her eyes and shouted "Darnaanaa!" This is an intertextual reference to a classic comic book story Darna by Filipino artist Mars Ravelo, whose protagonist is an ordinary woman who becomes a super hero when she swallows a stone. Believing that she gained powers, the persona's cousin suddenly kicked and punched everything in sight but only managed to get beetles all over her. The humor displayed in this poem contributes to the cynicism towards the effectiveness of *anting-antings*. Although the elderly continue to recount the stories as if they were real, the younger generations continue to drift away from this belief and develop a lack of confidence in them, just as it was with Christian traditions and practices portrayed in the poem *bai Marina*.

Di balkesan (strong), meanwhile, has a more serious tone than the previous poem and shows how the strong belief on the *anting-anting* as a ward against "evil" isn't all that it's cracked up to be. The persona here questions his uncle who has an amulet that protects him from any sort of weapon and also gives him the ability to read the life written in the palms. He has second-thoughts since, if his uncle really has that kind of

power, why is it that his wife has to sell shrimp paste and fish sauce in the market; his son lost in the woods because he won't accompany him to school and strikes him like an animal; and boasts in front of his friends while drinking excessively.

Di galing kayo kuno pangamaen?
Nayarin tua narayin tua
Say pankelaoan ko balet
No tuan oala'y kakabatan yo
Akin et ag yo nanengneng
Akin et ag yo napabatik
Iratan so aniani ed bilay yo

They say you have a talisman uncle?
It may be true it may be true
What I'm astonished of however is
If it's true you have the knowledge
Why can't you see
Why can't you make them run
Those ghosts in your life

Aniani na ngiras
Aniani na inkabuanges

Ghost of hunger
Ghost of drunkenness

Here we are shown how a child, or perhaps an adolescent, would view his elders who believe strongly in the powers of the amulet that they tend to forget that the amulet does not give them protection from and power over all the different "evils". We see here someone who transcends the reverent subscription to a single system of belief and knows the limits. This poem, along with the previous ones, shows a reflection not only of the beliefs of the author, Villafania, who believes in folk Christianity, a blending of the old and the new, but of the beliefs of the general contemporary Pangasinenses' as well.

Uliran ed pigaran baley ed Pangasinan (Legends in some towns in Pangasinan) is a collection of seven short legends that, as the title suggests, are familiar to the different towns in the province. As short as these mini legends are, they show glimpses into the culture of Pangasinan such as the belief in the supernatural and idiomatic expressions anchored in history. Supernatural beliefs include powers and magical creatures. The first one talks about *Pedron sankategteg* (Pedro who is very short) who is able to carry very heavy stuff such as the *lasong* or the large wooden pestle used to pound rice. Although

there is probably nothing supernatural about Pedro, he exemplifies the value of the Pangasinenses of being industrious, especially when it comes to agricultural matters, symbolized by the *lasong*. Since the nineteenth century, people recognize the diligence of the Pangasinenses, even quoting one of its alcalde mayors saying that “among all the natives of these islands, the Pangasinanses appear to me to be the most active and industrious, very energetic in producing profit and knowing how to make a scanty capital increase in all possible manner” (Cortes 1974, 21). The second and third one, talks of supernatural powers, particularly with the aid of the *anting-anting*. The second legend talks of *laki Piliás* (grandfather Piliás) who has powers that enables him to shepherd cows on the tops of the bamboos. This is reminiscent of another legend that originated from the town of San Quintin wherein their leader named Lango-lango had an *anting-anting*, which “enabled him to ride his horse on tree-tops, in the air, or atop of houses” (Pasyalang Pangasinan n.d.). The third legend, conversely, talks about *Kapitan Tiago* (Captain Tiago) who can’t be penetrated by blade and has super human strength. As already mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the Pangasinenses, especially the elder ones, are firm believers in the powers of amulets, and *laki Piliás* and *Kapitan Tiago* are but two of many who are supposedly made invincible through amulets and talismans. Even war heroes such as Gabriella Silang, Andres Malong and Juan de la Cruz Palaris were reported to have possessed anting-anting (Jovellanos 2004). Another legend is that of the town of San Carlos where most of the people are *dumaralos* or farmers and that you should not go boasting if you’re not *amputi’y layag* or you won’t last long. The idiomatic expression *amputi’y layag* (white ears) refers to a person who is violent and will not hesitate to kill to defend himself. This expression originated from the Spanish

era, where the people cut off the ears of the Spaniards who oppressed them (Magno 1992). The last two legends, now, talks of supernatural beings. The first talks of “*parada da’ra’y dika’y dalin* (parade of the grass of earth)” and the other talks of the infamous *tikbalang*. Usually, the term *dika’y dalin* (grass of earth) refers to a person who is always out of the house (Magno 1992). However, in this context, it refers to something much more bizarre. When asked about the term, the native elderly Pangasinenses would say that it refers to a swarm of *dwende* or dwarfs. They are said to be either in black (bad) or in white (good) and that they only show themselves to one person of their choice. Most refer to them as evil and would run away once they see them. The *tikbalang*, on the other hand, is a half-man, half-horse creature from Philippine folklore, which misleads travelers so they’ll get lost and the way to counter it is to wear your shirt inside-out (Lindermans 2004). This supernatural being is known, not only to the Pangasinenses but to the rest of the country as well.

The second predominant, ubiquitous theme in Villafania’s poetry is romance. The saying “we Filipinos are romantics at heart” can clearly be seen in literature. From Francisco Balagtas to Virgilio Almario, our literature is rich in ballads and songs praising the virtues of love, as well as its ability to inspire emotional agony. Even well-known Pangasinan writers such as Pablo Mejia and Maria Magsano, dabbled in themes of love in some of their works. Villafania’s poems, in *Balikas na Caboloan*, is no different. His poems, to quote Crisanta Nelmidia-Flores, “prefigure the romantic bard whose love interest rests in his field of dreams” (Nelmidia-Flores 2005, 7). In *sika* (you) and *sonata cantata*, we see the glories of love and its expressions that cause two souls to become one. On the other hand, we also see the internal anguish caused by unrequited love in his

poems *pinabli* (love), *patanir* (goodbye), *balikas ya anggapo'y litra* (verses without letters), *panalagar* (waiting), *iliw* (anxious) and *dua'ran liriko* (two lyrics). What makes these poems distinctly Pangasinan besides the language is, perhaps, its references to some of the people's culture and history as well as its use of imagery that relies heavily on nature. An example is the reference to Urduja, in the poem *sika* (you) where the persona compares his beloved to the mighty warrior princess. Urduja, the heroine of Pangasinan, is said to be princess of the kingdom of Tawalisi, which, according to Rizal's theory, is existing in the "neighborhood of the northern part of the Philippines," and whose narrative became historical truth during the American period (Nelmidia-Flores n.d.) Zoilo M. Galang published books that mentioned of Urudja and described her as "young, beautiful, well-educated and good warrior who personally led her soldiers to the battle fields and said to be an Amazonic ruler who was visited in 1349 or 1348 by Ibn Batuta, Mohameddan traveler from Morocco." Urduja has become a symbol for the articulation of women, not only in Pangasinan but women throughout the country, as well as a defensive response to the onslaught of Hispanization (Nelmidia-Flores n.d.).

For the most part, what makes these romantic poems distinctly Pangasinan is its use of imagery from nature, which also brings us to the third theme: the bucolic. The repetitive images of *kaumaan* (fields), *sibilao* (spring/rain), *pilapil* (rice paddies), *rosas* (flowers), *dika* (grass) and other metaphors from nature evokes a sense of the easygoing, bucolic life of the Pangasinenses. The images, such as in that of the poem *dia ed uma* (in the field), paint a picture of how life is in the province:

Singa no sakey ya ogaw
Pinalabas ko'y oras ya ombabatik

Like a child
I let the time pass running

Tatandagan ira'y baga-bagan mantetekiab	Peering at the flying kites
Tan nanduruman lupa na lurem	And different faces of clouds
Angob na kapan-anin pagey	Smells of freshly harvested rice
So sibok na dagem	Is the breeze

His poetry stimulates the senses that you can almost smell the “*kapan-anin pagey* (freshly harvested rice)” that the poem describes. Among other things, it also stimulates the sense of sight which drinks in the images of the fields:

Ipipintak ed kanonotan	I'm painting in my mind
So nanenengneng na mata:	What the eyes can see
Kaabungan ed gilig na alog	Houses at the side of the meadow
Totoon ag ko la nabirbir so lupa	People whose faces I couldn't
Tinmalimokor a talaib	recognize / Kneeling cogon grass
Tinmeteoek a kaoayan	Bowing bamboo stems
Akapagor a dueg	A tethered carabao
Manbagtik iran ogugaw	Children running
Tan sayan alenleneg ya galusa	and this one cart
Ed silong na akasia	at the base of the acacia

Similarly, one of his poems is a collection of seven haikus which conjure images of nature, as well. Although, it is not surprising since Japanese haikus originally take images from nature as subjects of their poetry, Villafania's haikus take metaphors from rice fields, which are common scenery in Pangasinan as agriculture is the natives' primary source of livelihood:

Panag-ani la	Harvest time
Balitok la'y kolor	Gold is the color
Na kaalugan	of the fields

Aside from the rice fields, Villafania also mentions of a river in the province which is “the most extensive river system in Pangasinan” (Ferrer n.d.). *Dia'd ilog Ari* (In river King) is a poem which describes the Agno river's “downfall.” Agno is fondly called ilog Ari by elders due to its expansiveness. The river embraces the whole provinces of

Pangasinan and Tarlac and part of Mt. Province, Nueva Vizcaya, Zambales, Pampanga and Nueva Ecija and its periodic flooding is the reason for Pangasinan's rich alluvial soil (Ferrer n.d.). It also serves as a major source of irrigation and inland fishing ground (Ferrer n.d.). The poem begins by recalling how, long ago, one can "hear the laughter / of the children bathing." However, after twenty five years of abandonment, the waters are already "darkened and dirty" and the cogon grass stood tall like guardians. The fact that the poem states an exact amount of time (e.i 25 years) shows that this is reminiscent of the author's memories of the river, which coincidentally is located at the back of their house (Villafania 2010).

Unlike the poverty-ridden plots of Iluko stories and the class struggle themes of Hiligaynon poetry, Pangasinan literary traditions have been observed to be characterized by geity and festivity (Nelmidia-Flores 2005). Nelmidia-Flores explains this further:

It is because Pangasinan literature sources its materials from the fertile agricultural plains of interior Caboloan which is perennially irrigated by the Agno river. Pangasinan *anlong* for instance derives its restlessness not from peasant agitations but from romantic musings of farm boys in their adolescence (Nelmidia-Flores 2005, 7).

The majority of Villafania's poetry fits in with this description of Pangasinan literature: "romantic musings of farm boys in their adolescence." The picturesque metaphors within the poems capture the captivating beauty of the provincial plains.

The fourth predominant theme is the struggle both in social and linguistic matters. Completely opposite of the previous images of nature and calmness, two of his poems,

Dia'd pagew na Cordillera (In the heart of Cordillera) and *Dala na tumatagaumen*¹ (Blood of the storyteller), depict images of social unrest and warfare. The first one talks about the farmers who, in the beginning, are heard “carrying plows not guns / sweat not blood is trickling / on their burnt skin” but became like barbarians due to anger. They received their death in the fields, “no name or memory” and were buried into oblivion. The second poem talks to the storyteller who “died a hundred deaths” showered by bullets when he joined the battle in the fields. Both poems were inspired by the story of Fr. Conrado Balweg, the renegade priest (Villafania 2010). Conrado Balweg, a Cordilleran priest, who attended the priest school, Societas Verbi Divini (SVD), and was also in contact with the teachings of Marxism and the Liberation Theology, which says that the church has to focus its attention to the poor and discriminated people deprived of their rights, joined the NPA (New People’s Army) in 1979 and became the “Robin Hood of the Cordilleras” (Bethge 2007). “The military has since identified him as the leader and mastermind of a number of NPA attacks against military outposts, bases and detachments in the Mountain Province area. (Drona 2006)” In the same year, his group was reported to have killed 46 government soldiers and 6 armed forced informers in 29 collisions with the armed forced and was wanted dead or alive and was given a head money of P200,000 by the government (Bethge 2007). Balweg, having been a former priest, concedes that “guns will not win the war, but the justness of the cause will” (Bethge 2007). He was later shot dead in 1999 New Year ’s Eve and his murderers are

1. Tumatagaumen – in the old days, *tumatagaumen* is not just a storyteller but a combination of *baknang* [rich class], *anacbanua* [pangolo, of highest rank and sometimes acts as cabeza de barangay] and *umaanlong* [poet] (Villafania 2010).

yet to be identified (Bethge 2007). Although Balweg is a native of the Cordilleras, his story, and thus the poems, is still relevant to the situation of Pangasinan since the province is also under struggle, albeit not as bloody. The linguistic situation of Pangasinan, then and now, is that of struggle to revive a dying language. It is said that there is a rapid decay of Pangasinan dialect due to disuse and “absorption” of another region’s culture (Serote 2000). As already stated previously, Villafania’s purpose in writing in the vernacular is to inspire younger generations of poets to follow suit and in so doing, would revive Pangasinan as a literary language. These sentiments are echoed in his poem *lingaw* (*look back*):

Say kuan da ‘man	Long ago, they say
Ag ka makasabi ed laen mo	You won’t reach your destination
No ag mo amta so onlingaw	if you don’t know how to look back
Ed nanlapuan mo	to the place where you came from
Tan no maminsan	and sometimes
Kanepegan so ompaoil	it’s you’re responsibility to return
Laut la no oala’y manaalagar	especially when someone’s waiting
Kanian nia ak natan	that’s why here I am now
Masibeg ya ompaoil	bravely returning
Lapu’d amtak ya oala kan	because I know that you’re there
Sabien	to come upon

Although at first it may seem as if it is a romantic poem, it nevertheless echoes the message that it is one’s responsibility to return to his origins for there, his people await his return, and in so doing paves the way for his and his people’s future. Similarly, this is the message that Villafania wishes to impart to his successors: that they should acknowledge their roots and pave the way for its revival and future.

In a more direct treatment of the message, *bini* (seed), which is a poem dedicated to the *Ulupan na Pansiansia’y Salitan Pangasinan* (Association for the Preservation of

the Pangasinan Language) and to the writers who write in their mother tongue, urges and persuades every writer to “spread seedlings in their entire homeland” so they’ll grow abundantly and that plentiful fruits will be harvested. In the second stanza, he qualifies this metaphor:

Onya komun so gaoaen tayo	I hope this is what we do
Ed litiratura’y Pangasinan	to the literature of Pangasinan
Isulat – payamanen so porma	write – enrich its form
Imahin tan say ritorika to	its image and rhetoric
Tan uksoyen ed antolohiya	and arrange into anthology
Ipaamta ed saray karaklan	make known to many
Say bilay na sakey a salita	that the life of one language
Oala’d mabunan litiratura	is in an abundant literature

It is plain to see that Villafania’s memories and general personal history has manifested itself in his poetry. Using the knowledge that he acquired from his surroundings as he grew up, he is able to piece together a sort of representation of the province in all aspects. This is especially clearly seen in his poems “skylab”, “Santo Tomas High School”, “Ermita”, “Konbilay (My life)”, “Urduja” and “Palsot (Slingshot)”. *Skylab* is a reference to the U.S. science and engineering laboratory which was launched into Earth’s orbit in 1973 (NASA n.d.). Skylab fell into orbit in 1979 and impacted the Earth’s surface causing debris to disperse from the Southeastern Indian Ocean to Western Australia (NASA n.d.). The poem talks about a child’s fascination and fixation with the event that led him to spread wild, ridiculous rumors so he would be noticed by his peers. Villafania, who was eight years old at the time of the impact, admitted, in an interview, that he remembers kids talking about it even in school. *Santo Tomas High School*, as the title suggests, refers to the high school in which Villafania attended. It talks of his experiences within the school from fist fights to the embarrassing Junior-Senior prom.

Ermita, on the other hand, is a contemplation of life's questions while he resided in that part of town. Ermita is a district in Manila. Ermita is a significant place for Villafania since he disclosed that he had lived there for about seven years and that in that rented room, he had written some of his poems (Villafania 2010). *Konbilay* (my life) is a poem dedicated to Alberto Villafania, and talks about a conversation they have had in a short visit he made back home. Ideas, images, concepts and everything in his surroundings give Villafania inspiration in writing his poetry which is clearly manifested in most of them.

It is evident, especially in light of the previously mentioned poem *bini* (seed), that Villafania's poetry is didactic in nature, meaning that they are meant to entertain as well as instruct. This characteristic of Pangasinan literature is prevalent, especially to previous writers such as Maria Magsano and Pablo Mejia. "The readers of Pangasinan literature take didacticism as a matter of course. They expect, if not demand, that they read contain passages of advice and warning, inspiration and condemnation, pleas and exhortation, and always with illustrations from life" (Magno 1992, 96). Perhaps the reason behind this, says Magno (1992), is that the people have been "reared in a long uninterrupted tradition of didactic literature – from proverbs to lives of saints, from the *impanbilay* (Pangasinan version of awit and korido) to moro-moros and zarzuelas, all laden with lessons from life" (Magno 1992, 96). For Maria Magsano, her works are definitely didactic: that their reason for being is precisely the lessons which they carry (Magno 1992). However, Villafania (2003), who innovated Pangasinan poetry, has a different way of showing didacticism: "*Say anlong et alioan mainumay a basaen a singa say prosa ono salaysay. Say prosa et panangipatalos tan panangipalioaoa, balet say anlong et panangipalikna* [Poetry isn't as easily read as prose or essay. Prose conveys its message

by instructing and explaining, but poetry conveys by making you feel].” By making his readers “feel” the language, the culture, and the history of their land by means of his poetry, he is able to awaken in them a sense of pride that would, hopefully, ignite a spark that will enable next generations of *umaanlong* or poets to pick up where he left off and continue to enrich Pangasinan’s literature.

So, how does all of these information fit in to the reconfiguration of space from the tangible (Pangasinan) to the ideological (Caboloan)? Quite simply, Villafania harnesses his language, his culture and his history, *fashions* them in order to create a “space” that is both uniquely his and uniquely Pangasinan. His poetry is not merely a manifestation of sentimentality as it may first appear, but it is a revelation of a poet who is very much in-touch with his roots (Nelmidia-Flores 2005). His remembrance or memories, experiences, combined with knowledge of the Pangasinan culture and history gives rise to a realm that is reminiscent of an older time. The now-extinct Caboloan is reborn in his words, albeit abstract, and this, in turn, serves as the point by which he, as previously stated, awakens their sense of pride and invigorates their affinity with their origins.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

By using Stephen Greenblatt's New Historical critical theory, which insists that texts are firmly embedded in the institutions of the society, the researcher is able to analyze Santiago Villafania's poems, in his book *Balikas na Caboloan*, by looking into the social and cultural beliefs that it addressed, the manifestation of the author's personal history into the text and how all of these serve to reconfigure Pangasinan into a state of ideology, that is Caboloan.

The researcher found out that there are four themes that are predominant in the texts: (1) beliefs, both Christian and folk; (2) romance; (3) cult of nature/bucolic; and (4) linguistic and social struggle. The text reveals that it does not favor a single belief system, just like Villafania, who believes in folk Catholicism, a blending of both Christianity and indigenous beliefs. The poems that reflected beliefs both Christian and folk shows that there should be a healthy balance between the two. The text also reveals romantic thoughts, which is a theme ubiquitous not just in Pangasinan literature, but in general Philippine literature as well. The cult of nature or the image of the bucolic life is also prevalent in the poems through the frequent use of metaphors from nature. It paints a clear picture of the laid-back life of the Pangasinenses. The social struggle depicted by some of the poems, on the other hand, is paralleled to the linguistic situation in Pangasinan, which can be described as a struggle to reinvigorate a dying language.

The study also showed that the author's memories, experiences and personal history are manifested in the texts. Traces of his childhood experiences, as well as memories of situations within his time, were reflected in some of the texts. This proves

one of the principles of New Historicism which rejects the idea of the authorial genius, meaning that the author does not create works purely out of his own imagination but rather, employs ideas, beliefs, vocabularies and others from his culture.

The study also revealed the didactic nature of Villafania's poetry, meaning that it entertains as well as "instructs". Villafania uses his words and poetry to make the readers "feel" the Pangasinan culture so that he or she will be inspired to follow in his footsteps and further enrich the literature of the Province.

By fashioning all of these beliefs, practices and vocabularies, Villafania was able to recreate the nonexistent Caboloan and turn it into a realm or a state of ideology. By following the philosophy that one can't reach his or her destination if one doesn't know how to look back to one's origins, this state of ideology (Caboloan) now functions as a "light" by which further generations of young-blooded *umaanlong* would be re-awakened and inspired to pave the way for the future of Pangasinan.

Recommendation/s

This study has barely scratched the surface of contemporary Pangasinan literature. Perhaps, by using a different theoretical framework, we may be able to shed new light into the texts by, say, focusing on other things such as its form. Or, following the same author, other researchers may delve into the other books or works of Villafania. If possible, one may also look into other contemporary Pangasinan writers who write in the vernacular, if there are any, and do a comparative study on both authors.

Pursuing research studies that give preference to Pangasinan literature, or any other regional literature for that matter, enriches our knowledge of our country's history and culture. In order to have a sense of completeness, we must not be partial only to the center (mainstream, canon) but we must also pay attention and give importance to the periphery (minority, regional).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Researcher's Interview with Sr. Santiago Villafania

1. How would you describe your childhood? upbringing?

My parents were both working then so, basically, I grew up under the care of my grandmother and aunts. I was born in Tuliao, Sta. Barbara then we moved to several places like Aguilar, Dagupan and Mangaldan.

I'd say I was a very curious child. I loved to listen to the stories of the old folks. And even when my grandmother or aunts would tell stories, I was the most attentive one. I'd rather stay up late at night listening to their stories than watch TV.

2. Were you greatly exposed to old traditions by your parents/elders? How so?

I do not actually consider it as old tradition/s. It so happens that I was interested in Pangasinan stories (tongtong) and legends/myths (uliran). Those stories perhaps left a lasting imprint in my mind.

3. Did certain books/magazines/articles influence your writing?

I learned to read at an early age and the first books I read were Ibong Adarna, Florante at Laura and Hiyas. Of course, I've also read the so-called Lunario and the Pangasinan Bible.

When I was in high school, I was already exposed to world literature and history. In my college years, I took up English as a major. I read a lot of books during my college days: medieval writings, the romantic poets, classic literatures and works of avant-garde writers, haiku poets, Leonard Cohen, E. E. Cummings, Jose Garcia Villa, etc.

As for the influence, I'd say Cummings and Villa [were my inspiration] for my early works. But as for my Pangasinan writings, I am still trying to find my own voice.

4. From reading your poetry and other articles that you wrote, it is clear that you are advocating for the resurgence of Pangasinan as a literary language. What led you to pursue this path?

Way back in 2000, I could not find any literary works in Pangasinan language online, so I translated some of my poems in English into Pangasinan and posted them on my personal website / blog. [There was also a] paucity of published literary works in Pangasinan.

I also found out later that most of our vernacular writers dwindled in number as more and more Pangasinan writers educated and exposed to foreign literatures and periodicals,

shifted to English.

I believe that Pangasinan, as one of the major languages spoken in the country, must also have a very rich literature at par with other Philippine languages. We can only achieve this if our writers and poets will write in our native language.

5. Did the "skylab phenomenon" have a big impact on your childhood? in adulthood? What do you remember from that event?

Not really. But during my childhood days, it was a historic event. Funny and ridiculous stories emerged because of it. Kids that we were, we talked about it even in school.

6. In my research and inquiries, nobody knows of an "ilog Ari." Is this a fictional place? If not, where is it and is it a river you frequented as a child?

It's a real river. The entire Agno river is the ilog Ari. The river in Sta. Barbara just at the back of my house is part of it. Old folks there called it Ari. That's why I used it in my poems.

7. What are your religious views/beliefs? How do you view Christianity?

I grew up reciting/praying the rosary and reading the Bible in the Pangasinan language. My grandmother taught me [these]. [Furthermore], I attended Santo Tomas High School in Mangaldan [a Catholic school]. I believe I am a folk Catholic and perhaps a pantheist.

8. What was the significance of Ermita in your life?

I lived in Ermita for about 7 years. I [also] wrote some of my poems [there].

9. What is "dayat na Abirni"?

"dayat na Abirni" means the entrance to the underworld

"facilis descensus Averno"

Latin, lit. "the descent of Avernus..." ["Aeneid," VI.126], in reference to Avernus, a reputed entrance to the underworld.

10. Is *tumatagaumen* a storyteller?

Yes. But, in the old days tumatagaumen is not just a storyteller but the elder of the clan. he/she has the qualities of a baknang, anacbanua and umaanlong combined.

11. What was your inspiration behind "*dia'd pagew na Cordillera*" and "*dala na tumatagaumen*"? Was this based on a real war?

Yes, [These were inspired by] Fr. Balweg's story.

APPENDIX B

These are the 31 poems in Santiago Villafania's *Balikas na Caboloan*, which were utilized in the study. The book only contained the Pangasinan version and so I opted to include a translation into Filipino and English. Instead of just providing the English translations of the poems since my study *is* in English, I decided to also include Filipino translations since the structure and sensibilities of the Pangasinan language is closer and more similar to this than in English.

I included the complete poems here in the appendices so that the readers may be able to fully read them since only snippets were inserted in the Chapter 4 of this paper. The rough Filipino and English translations are for the benefit of the nonPangasinan-speaking readers and are for comprehension's sake only, not as a substitute to the original poems.

List of Poems

Para ed say manangaro na salitan Pangasinan.....	66
Palsot.....	67
Skylab.....	68
Di balkesan.....	70
Bai Marina.....	72
Pinabli.....	73
Sika.....	76
Dia'd ilog Ari.....	78
Dua'ran Liriko.....	79
Ngarem na bilay.....	80
Lingaw.....	81
Santo Tomas High School.....	82
Bales.....	85
Dia ed uma.....	87
Pito'ran haiku.....	88
Ermita.....	90
Sikaran laoanan.....	91
Ibolusion.....	92

Patanir.....	93
Kareenan.....	94
Balikas ya anggapo'y litra.....	95
Uliran ed pigaran baley ed Pangasinan.....	97
Dia'd pagew na Cordillera.....	100
Bini.....	101
Konbilay.....	102
Sonata cantata.....	105
Dala na tumatagaumen.....	107
Panalagar.....	108
Bato ed poso'y ponti.....	109
Urduja.....	112
Iliw.....	113

**Para ed saray manangaro na salitan
Pangasinan**

Niraya so balikas ya pininglis
Ed libro na kanunotan
Abayag lan akaatol ed lingoan
Dengel yo so nanduruman bosis
Na sakey a too

Ogaw

Manangaro

Umaanlong tan soldado
Tan saray sermon na pirsonan
Linmesa antis ed siak

Araya et bosis ed dagem
Esaes

Eyag tan kareenan

Pokal na puson oniimuas
Ed banua ton emel
Tan anggapo'y liknaan

**Para sa mga nagmamahal sa salitang
Pangasinan**

Eto ang mga talata na pinunit
Mula sa libro ng isipan
Matagal nang nakatago sa limot
Dinggin niyo ang iba't ibang boses
Ng isang tao

Bata

Nagmamahal

Manunula at sundalo
At ang mga sermon ng personang
Lumitaw bago sakin

Eto ang mga boses sa hangin
Bulong

Sigaw at katahimikan

Tibok ng pusong naghihingalo
Sa araw ng pipi
At walang malay

**For those who love the Pangasinan
language**

Here are the verses torn
From the book of thoughts
Long before hidden in oblivion
Hear the different voices
Of one person

Child

Lover

Poet and soldier
And the sermons of personas who
Surfaced before me

Here are the voices in the wind
Whisper

Shout and silence

Beating of the dying heart
In the sun of the mute
And the lifeless

Palsot

Yaman na sakey ya ogaw
No panaon to la
Palsot a gaoa ed sanga'y kiew
Katat tan goma
Amamayo manlapu'd ibuta'y agew
Angga la'd pansironget
Akasabit ed beklew
Oala'd dalem na danganan
Akdul ni no labi

Say basyo na lata ed dalan
Nakukumpil agi
Andibali lan nabutawbutaw
Ira'y banga tan sayap
Napaktak labat so uusilan
Manuk ya atap

No asabia'y disgrasia o malas
Say impalsot a bato
Binmalandra tan pinmaoil
Ed sikaton dili
Mannangis kalamor so ogaw
Onsempet a bugkulan

Tirador

Yaman ng isang bata
Kapag panahon na niya
Tirador na gawa sa sanga ng kahoy
Katad at goma
Nilalaro mula pagsikat ng araw
Hanggang dapit-hapon
Nakasabit sa leeg
Nasa ilalim ng unan
Katabi pa 'pag gabi

Ang basyo ng lata sa daan
Nayuyupi
'Di bale nang mabutas-butas
Ang mga banga at palayok
Mahulog lang ang hinahabol
Mailap na ibon

Kapag dumating ang disgrasya o malas
Ang tinirador na bato
Bumalandra at bumalik
Sa kanya mismo
Umiiyak tuloy ang bata
Uuwing may bukol

Slingshot

The wealth of a child
In his own time
A slingshot made of wood
Leather and rubber
Played with from sunrise
Until sunset
Suspended from the neck
Underneath the pillows
Cuddled with at night

The empty can on the road
Is becoming dented
It doesn't matter if it gets holes
The clay vases and cooking pots
Just to plummet
The wild bird

When disaster or bad luck comes
The propelled stone
Bounced back and returned
To him personally
The child cried
Going home with a lump on the head

skylab

On July 11, 1979, Skylab impacted the Earth surface. The debris dispersion area stretched from the Southeastern Indian Ocean across a sparsely populated section of Western Australia.

nen siak so ogaw ni
oala'y tongtong ya ag ko nalingoanan
angga ni ed natan
nen pinmaoay ima'y balitan
impangipatekiab na Amerika
ed sama'y tataoagen da'y skylab

say kuan da no napelag
magnaliw a dabuk so amin a ganagana
anggapo la'y ontubo ultimo dika
dia'd intiron baley a Sta. Barbara

masiken man odino ogaw
maong a mangistorya
osa-osa diman
osa-osa dia
talabotob diman
talabotob dia
oala'y sakey ya ama amalandey
lapu'd kakapuyan na kanonotan
lapu'd kakapuyan na linaoa
angga'd sinmabi so oras

skylab

Noong July 11, 1979, sumalpok ang Skylab sa ibabaw ng mundo. Ang pagkalat ng mga bahagi nito ay umabot mula Southeastern Indian Ocean hanggang sa isang bahagi ng Western Australia na kakaunti ang populasyon.

noong ako'y bata pa
mayroong usap-usapang di ko malilimutan
hanggang sa kasalukuyan
noong lumabas ang balitang
pagpapalipad ng Amerika
doon sa tinatawag nilang skylab

ang sabi nila kapag nalaglag
magmimistulang alikabok ang lahat ng
bagay
wala nang tutubo ultimo damo
sa buong bayan ng Sta. Barbara

matanda man o kaya'y bata
magaling na magkwento
usap-usapan doon
usap-usapan dito
tsismis doon
tsismis dito
may isang ama na namundok
dahil sa kahinaan ng pag-iisip
dahil sa kahinaan ng kalooban
hanggang sa dumating ang oras

skylab

On July 11, 1979, Skylab impacted the Earth surface. The debris dispersion area stretched from the Southeastern Indian Ocean across a sparsely populated section of Western Australia.

When I was a kid
There was a rumor I will never forget
Until today
When the news came out
Of the American's flight
Of that thing they call skylab

They say when it falls
Everything will become dust
Nothing will grow even grass
On the whole town of Sta. Barbara

Old or young
They were good storytellers
Rumor there
Rumor here
Gossip there
Gossip here
There was this man who went to the mountains
Because of his weakness of mind
Because of his weakness of will

aderalan na kalakal
say tetel oala'd sama'y lasin* skylab

skylab
pansegio na pangoloan mi
pian ag la milan manbantay na TV
ed biek na abung no labi
dia'd takut nakugkugip ni

no nanunotan ko natan
makakaimis ak labat ed dili
laut la ima'y impanbida'd saray kasionan
say skylab aminsan ya agew dinmalan
dia'd tuktok na abung mi
dia't peles et imbatik to
ira'y manuk

aso tan baka
pati kumon si bai
balet agoyor mi'd sali

lapu'd maong ya impangidimonsa
lapu'd maong ya impangipalioaoa
dakel so apanisia
bida ak ya sakey simba

akapanlastog tan akapantila
pian ag labat naandian
na katongtong tan kagalaw
ono kalimog

nasiraan ng bait
ang sisi nandoon sa lintik na skylab

skylab
panakot ng panganay namin
para din a sumamang manood ng TV
sa kabilang bahay 'pag gabi
sa takot na mapanaginipang muli

kapag naaalala ko ngayon
napapangiti na lang sa sarili
lalo na 'yung pagpapasikat ko sa mga
kasama
ang skylab isang araw ay dumaan
sa tuktok ng bahay namin
sa bilis ay itinakbo nito
ang mga manok

aso at baka
pati sana si lola
pero nahila namin sa paa

dahil sa magandang pagkakatanghal
dahil sa magandang pagkakapaliwanang
maraming napaniwala ko
bida ako ng isang lingo

nakapagyabang at nakapagsinungaling
para 'di lang mawalan
ng kausap at kalaro
o kasama

he lost his mind
the blame lies on that freaking skylab

skylab
used by our older sibling to scare us
so we won't watch TV
in the neighbor's at night
in fear that we might dream of it

when I remember today
i just smile to myself
especially when I boasted to my peers
skylab went by one day
on top of our house
in its haste it blew with it
the hens

Dogs and cows
grandma would've been too
but we managed to pull her leg

because of the excellent demonstration
because of the excellent explanation
many believed me
i was a hero for a week

i was able to boast and lie
just so I won't lose
friends and playmates
or companions

di balkesan

di galing kayo kuno pangamaen?
oala kuno'y libro yon
insulat nen Melencio Sabila?
ag kayo kuno tablan na ayura
bala o antokaman ya ganagana?

arengel ko aminsang ed sikayo
inyesang yo ed dagem
Adra Egasum Iroc Uvuv Utrunum
sikato ya so sagradu tan sikriton
ngaran na amalsa pangibilin yo'd siak

binasa yo met so bilay
ya akasulat ed dakulap ko
manisia ak la komun
manisia ak la komun
balet oala so panduwaruak

laut la no nasabat ko
asaoa yon angob la'y agamang
asaoa yon angob la'y bagoong
dia'd panaglako ra'd tindaan

laut la no naimatonan ko
bolirek yon tangay-tangay ed kakieoan
ag yo labat naibaed ed iskuilaan
no basigan yo pa nimet
singa kayo mamabasig na ayep
a dueg ono baka

malakas

may anting-anting daw kayo tito?
mayroon daw kayong librong
sinulat ni Melencio Sabila?
di daw kayo tinatablan ng sandata
bala o anupamang bagay?

narinig ko minsan sa inyo
binulong niyo sa hangin
Adra Egasum Iroc Uvuv Utrunum
ito ang sagrado at sikretong
ngalan ng lumalang bilin niyo sa'kin

binasa niyo rin ang buhay
na nakasulat sa palad ko
maniniwala na sana ako
maniniwala na sana ako
ngunit may'ron akong pagdadalang-isip

lalo na 'pag nakasalubong ko
asawa niyong amoy nang alamang
asawa niyong amoy nang bagoong
sa pagtitinda nila sa palengke

lalo na 'pag napansin ko
bunso niyong nakatunganga sa kakahuyan
di niyo manlang masamahan sa paaralan
kung paluin niyo pa naman
para kayong namamalo ng hayop
na kalabaw o baka

strong

they say you have a talisman uncle?
They say you have a book
Written by Melencio Sabila?
They say you're not affected by arms
Bullets or any object?

Once I heard you
You whispered in the wind
Adra Egasum Iroc Uvuv Utrunum
This is the sacred and secret
Name of our creator you told me

You also read the life
Written in my palms
I would've believed you
I would've believed you
But I have second-thoughts

Especially when I meet
Your wife who smells like shrimp paste
Your wife who smells like fish sauce
Due to selling in the market

Especially when I notice
Your youngest staring at the woods
You won't even accompany him to school
And when you strike him
It's like your striking an animal
A carabao or cow

tan laut la no nanengneng ta ki'lan
manlalastog dia'd arap na inuman
say kuan yo napaktak so kulayot
dia'd taerm na linggis yo labat
saray aniani o antokaman ya ag
nanengneng
ombatik iran binuti'y ebet
lapu'd kebiew da ed sikayo

di galing kayo kuno pangamaen?
nayarin tua nayarin tua
say pankelaoan ko balet
no tuan oala'y kakabatan yo
akin et ag yo nanengneng
akin et ag yo napabatik
iratan so aniani ed bilay yo

aniani na ngiras
aniani na inkabuanges

at lalo na 'pag nakikita ko kayong
nagayabang sa harap ng inuman
sabi niyo malalaglag ang paniki
sa talim ng tingin niyo lang
ang mga multo o anupaman na di nakikita
tatakbo silang nakabuka ang pwet
dahil sa takot nila sa inyo

may anting-anting daw kayo tito?
maaaring totoo maaaring totoo
ang pinagtataka ko lang
kung totoong may karunungan kayo
bakit 'di niyo makita
bakit 'di niyo mapatakbo
'yang mga multo sa buhay niyo

multo ng gutom
multo ng pagkalango

And especially when I see you
Boasting in front of your drinking spree
You say bats would fall
Only because of the sharpness of your
stare
Ghosts or anything that can't be seen
Would run with their butts spread open
Because of their fear of you

They say you have a talisman uncle?
It may be true it may be true
What I'm astonished of however is
If it's true you have the knowledge
Why can't you see
Why can't you make them run
Those ghosts in your life

Ghost of hunger
Ghost of drunkenness

bai Marina

duga pa latan bai
natetelek ak lan mandedengel
ed sata'y ag napultot yon
Ama Mi tan Ave Maria

akatangay kayo la'd altar
no onsabi la'y ala sais
aoit yo la'y rosarion
masilesileng tan pinmuti la
ed kabebemben yo

nima'y niluto balet
inmangob tan atektek la
nima'y sira ed palanggana
ag to ni naurasan nen atsi
mikokotoan diman ed biek ya abung
nima'y impesak anggapo ni'y angisirum

duga pa latan bai duga la
naksel la so kamarerua yo'd dasal
nia kami balet ay
amputiputi la'y busaleg
manmulmulagat la'd eras
pialagar mi'y ibaga yo'y

*dia'd ngara'y ama. . .
dia'y ngara'y anak. . .
tan ispirito santo. . .*

lola Marina

tama na nga yan lola
nabibingi na ako kakadinig
jan sa 'di maputol niyong
Ama Namin at Ave Maria

nakatanga na kayo sa altar
'pag sapit ng ala sais
bitbit niyo na ang rosaryong
makinang at pumuti na
sa kakahawak niyo

nandoon pero ang kanin
nangamoy at sunog na
nandoon ang isda sa palanggana
'di pa nahugasan ni ate
nakikipag-kutohan doon sa kapitbahay
nandoon ang sampay wala pang nagsilong

tama na nga yan lola tama na
busog na ang kaluluwa niyo sa dasal
heto pero kami
namumutla na ang labi
dilat na ang mata sa gutom
hinihintay naming sabihin niyo

*sa ngalan ng ama. . .
sa ngalan ng anak. . .
at espirito santo. . .*

grandma Marina

stop that grandma
im going deaf hearing
your never-ending
Our Father and Ave Maria

you're staring at the altar
when the clock strikes six
carrying your rosary
that's shiny and faded
from over-use

there's the rice however
smelling and burnt already
there's the fish in the pan
hasn't been washed by sister yet who's
removing head lice there with the neighbor
there's the laundry nobody took them yet

stop that grandma stop that
your soul's already full with prayer
but here we are
going pale in the lips
wide-eyed due to hunger
waiting for you to say

*in the name of the father. . .
in the name of the son. . .
and the holy spirit. . .*

mangan iti la!

pinabli

i.
tutuntonen ko so pilapil
a singa panuntunton ko nen saman
asingsingger la so abung
balet singa arawdao ni
lapu'd pannodnonot ko
ed maliwliaoan lupam

ii.
labin-oalo'y taon
nen sika'y akabat
pangoloan labat
na apat taon ed siak
balet singa ag mo ak agi
no katongtong mo

iii.
dinakat ko'y mapitek a dalan
nantalem a ked ambetel
ya beyebey na uran
naibaan ka labat ya onsempet
naibaan ka labat no panagtanem

iv.
maliket tan dua a singa liket
na kaparak iran ogugaw

kain na tayo!

mahal

i.
tinutunton ko ang pilapil
tulad ng pagtunton ko noon
malapit na ang bahay
ngunit parang malayo pa
dahil sa pagisip ko
sa maliwanag mong mukha

ii.
labing walong taon
nang ika'y makilala
mas matanda lang
ng apat na taon sa akin
ngunit parang di ako bata
kung kausapin mo

iii.
tinahak ko ang maputik na daan
nagbabad sa malamig
na buhos ng malakas na ulan
masamahan ka lang na umuwi
masamahan ka lang sa pagtatanim

iv.
masaya tayong dalawa na tulad ng saya
ng katulad kong mga bata

let's eat!

love

i.
i tracked the rice paddy
like the way i tracked before
the house is near
but it feels so far away
because of my imagining
of your glowing face

ii.
eighteen years old
when i met you
you're only older
by four years
but i'm not like a kid to you
when you talk to me

iii.
i tracked the muddy road
i braved the cold
heavy downpour of the rain
just to accompany you home
just to accompany you in farming

iv.
we're both as happy as
the children like me

say pandumaan ko ed sikara
natalusan ko'y aoaoey mo
tan say balikas na matam
no akin

ag ko amta

v.

ayew-ayeen ko'y isabi na ngarem
no manpatanir ka la
liket ko so itandag na agew
no amaga so dalan
no balitok la'y kolor na pagey

vi.

nanunotan ko ni
diman ed alolong
dia ed tapew na pugaro
no panag-ani la
saray kagalaw ko et manuusilan
manpapatekiab na бага-baga
manbabalikas balet so matak
tan mansusulat na anlong so bibil ko
ed malinglinggas mon pagew

vii.

natan inaro
makulirep so sindag na silew
ed dorongaoan yo
sankarengel ko'y mansibsibek
iran ogugaw ed takayan

ang pagkakaiba ko lang sa kanila
naiintindihan ko ang kilos mo
at ang bigkas ng mga mata mo
kung bakit

di ko alam

v.

sinusumpa ko ang pagdating ng hapon
'pag magpapaalam ka na
Tuwa ko ang pagsikat ng araw
Kapag tuyo na ang daan
Kapag ginto na ang kulay ng palay

vi.

naaalala ko pa
doon sa maliit na pugo
sa ibabaw ng bukid
kapag pag-ani na
ang mga kalaro ko'y naghahabulan
nagpapalipad ng saranggola
bumibigkas pero ang mga mata ko
at sumusulat ng tula ang mga labi ko
sa napakaganda mong dibdib

vii.

ngayon mahal
mahina ang sinag ng ilaw
sa bintana niyo
naririnig ko ang humihikbing
mga bata sa hagdanan

my difference from them is that
i understand your actions
and the verses of your eyes
reason why

i don't know

v.

I curse the afternoon
When you say your goodbye
The sunrise is my joy
When the roads have become dry
When the rice stalks have become gold

vi.

I can still remember
There in the small hut
At the top of the fields
When it's harvest time
My friends are chasing around
Flying kites
But my eyes are speaking verses
And the lips are writing poetry
About your beautiful breasts

vii.

now love
the ray of light is dimmed
from your window
I can hear the sobbing
Of the children in your staircase

nen sinmegep ak

viii.

tampol a tinmerter so luak
a singa ngalab ed petang
nen sika'y anengneng
akarukol tan anggapo la'y liknaan

ix.

ag ko niamot so ermen
dia'd arap na kailin akaasaoa'd sika
amta k ontan met so ermen
ya agbibiten ton tinaynan mo
akapantalusan kamin
anggapo'y sakey a salitan
abitla

x.

inyamut ko'y luak ed sapli na uran
dinakat ko lamet so mapitek a dalan
ag ko nalikna so basig na dagem
anggapo la ima'y alolong
ed tapew na pugaro
amataan ko balet diman
so biin akaalagey...

*ay maong labat
ta niliing mo ak
ed maoges a kugip
pinabli*

nang umakyat ako

viii.

agad na tumulo ang luha ko
na parang umaalab sa init
nang ika'y makita
nakahiga at wala nang malay

ix.

di ko maitago ang lungkot
sa harap ng dayong napangasawa mo
alam ko ganyan din ang lungkot
na dinadala niyang iniwan mo
nakapagintindihan kaming
walang isang salitang
sinambit

x.

tinago ko ang luha ko sa patak ng ulan
tinahak ko ulit ang maputik na daan
di ko maramdaman ang hampas ng hangin
wala na 'yong maliit na kubo
sa ibabaw ng bukid
nakita ko pero doon
ang babaeng nakatayo...

*buti nalang
at sinagip mo ako
sa bangungot na ito
mahal*

when I climbed up

viii.

my tears immediately fell
roaring with heat
when I saw you
lying and without life

ix.

i couldn't hide my sorrow
in front of your husband
i know this is the same sorrow
that he carries when you left
we understood each other
without a single word
spoken

x.

i hid my tears in the rain
i tracked once more the muddy road
i couldn't feel the slamming of the wind
the little hut is no more
at the top of the fields
but there I saw
a woman standing...

*it's a good thing
you saved me
from this nightmare
love*

sika

sika
 sika so kalakal
 tan kaugsan na kanonotan ko
 sika so lua
 liket tan ermen na matak
 sika so esaes
 ingal tan kareenan na pakarengel ko
 sika so *Gumamela Celis*
 angob na rosas ed labi tan kabuasan

sika so engas
 samit tan pait na bibil ko
 sika so balikas
 bilay tan patey na inkamakatak
 sika so aplos
 petang tan betel na dakulap ko
 sika so panangaro
 parok na puso ed pagew ko

sika so taoen tan dalin
 sika so kamundoan
 mundo ya nanlapuan
 sika so bilang
 minuto ed kada oras
 agew na bulan ed onlalabas iran taon

ikaw

ikaw
 ikaw ang ikinabubuti
 at ikinasasama ng isipan ko
 ikaw ang luha
 ligaya at lungkot ng aking mga mata
 ikaw ang bulong
 ingay at katahimikan ng pandinig ko
 ikaw ang *Gumamela Celis*
 amoy ng rosas sa gabi at umaga

ikaw ang hininga
 tamis at pait ng labi ko
 ikaw ang tula
 buhay at kamatayan ng aking pagkamakata
 ikaw ang haplos
 init at lamig ng palad ko
 ikaw ang pag-ibig
 tibok ng puso sa dibdib ko

ikaw ang langit at lupa
 ikaw ang buong mundo
 mundo na pinagmulan
 ikaw ang bilang
 minuto sa kada oras
 araw ng buwan sa lumilipas na mga taon

you

you
 you are the goodness
 and wickedness of my thoughts
 you are the tear
 joy and sorrow of my eyes
 you are the whisper
 loudness and silence of my hearing
 you are the *Gumamela Celis*
 smell of roses at night and in the morning

you are the breath
 sweetness and bitterness of my lips
 you are the poem
 life and death of my poetic soul
 you are the caress
 warmth and coldness of my palms
 you are the love
 beat of the heart in my chest

you are sky and earth
 you are the whole world
 world of origin
 you are the numbers
 minute of every hour
 day of every month of every year

sika
sika so Urduja
na daan tan balon Pangasinan
sika et siak
siak et sika lamlamang
pinalsan pinankasakey
anino tan laman na Dyos
ya ag naigulis so lupa

ikaw
ikaw ang Urduja
ng luma at bagong Pangasinan
ikaw ay ako
ako ay ikaw rin lamang
nilalang na pinag-isa
anino at laman ng Dyos
na 'di maiguhit ang mukha

you
you are Urduja
of old ang new Pangasinan
you are me
I am you also
beings made one
shadow and flesh of a God
whose face can't be drawn

dia'd ilog Ari

nen saman dia'd ilog Ari
 sankarengel so liket
 na ogugaw a manaames
 no onkepa la'y bilonget
 tan abeba ya lurem
 na sibalao

osilan diman osilan dia
 inerel ed agew tan inamot ed labi
 angga'd sinmabi so oras
 say dalin ya angikutkutan
 na poseg et tinaynan
 tan pinaoil lam lamang kasumpal na
 duamplo tan lima'ran taon

dinmeket tan marutak la
 so danum na ilog
 ya datin singa salming ed linew
 ataragey la'ra'y talaib
 singa 'ra guardian akaalagey
 ed dalan paleksab ed ilog
 narerengel ko
 so masayaksak ya elek
 balet kaoalaan da la 'ra'y ogugaw?

say uni na nauyiao
 tan tiblong na salaksak
 mangipapanonot ya dia
 ed sayan ilog nen saman

sa ilog na Hari

noon sa Haring ilog
 maririnig ang tawa
 ng mga batang naliligo
 kapag humuhupa na ang dilim
 at mababang ulap
 ng tagsibol

habulan doon habulan dito
 habulan sa umaga taguan sa gabi
 hanggang sa dumating ang oras
 ang lupang pinagtabunan
 ng pusod ay iniwan
 at binalikan rin lamang pagkalipas ng
 dalawampu at limang taon

umitim at madumi na
 ang tubig ng ilog
 na dating parang salamin sa linaw
 matataas na ang mga talahib
 para silang mga guardiang nakatayo
 sa daan pababa ng ilog
 naririnig ko
 ang malakas na tawa
 ngunit nasaan ang mga bata?

ang paghuni ng maya
 at pagsisid ng piskador
 nagpapaalala na dito
 sa ilog na ito noon

in river King

long ago in river King
 you can hear the laughter
 of the children bathing
 when recedes the darkness
 and low clouds
 of spring

chasing there chasing here
 chasing in the morning hiding at night
 until there came the time
 the land where lies buried
 the navel was left
 and was returned to after
 twenty five years

darkened and dirty
 are the waters of the river now
 which was like a mirror in clarity before
 the cogon grass are now tall
 they're like guardians standing
 at the path leading down the river
 i can hear
 the loud laughter
 but where are the children?

the chirping of the sparrow
 and diving of the kingfisher
 reminds us that here
 in this river long ago

galaoan tan amesan
da'ra'y anghilis ya labus
tan lakseb

Dua'ran liriko

1.)

no maminsan say ag ilaloan onsabi
singa matakew no pegley-labi
singa no ama'y rosas
ed abay na dorongaoan
abangonan kon binmuneknek la
ed sayan kabuasan

2.)

aliling mo'y sakey a rosas
ed ag nagaoat a sanga
no basibasen ko'y lingis
napelag kan siansia

palaruan at paliguan
ng mga anghel na hubad
at walang damit

Dalawang liriko

1.)

minsan ang di inaasahan dumadating
parang magnanakaw sa hating gabi
parang 'yong bulaklak
sa tabi ng binatang
nagising akong bumaluktot na
sa umagang ito

2.)

hawig mo ang isang bulaklak
sa 'di maabot na sanga
kapag hahampasin ng tingin
mahuhulog ka rin

playground and bathing place
of the angels that are nude
and without clothes

Two lyrics

1.)

sometimes the unexpected happens
like a thief in the middle of the night
like that flower
beside the window
i woke up and it's already crumpled
this morning

2.)

you're like a flower
in an unreachable branch
when I slam you with a stare
you'll fall sooner or later

ngarem na bilay

ala sais
nilaknaban la'y bilonget
so dalan ya pasempet

naksaoan lay salin
ngalngali ag la naikurang
ed betel na dagem

ambelbelat la
ira'y loka-lokab na mata
tan takeb

tantandagan so silew
ed dorongaoan na abung
balet arawdao ni

piraoat la'y makasabi
pian makapanpainaoa
ed manaalagar lan dukulan

no makaugip ak
komun nabangon ak la
ya oala'd akualan mo kataoan

takipsilim ng buhay

ala sais
natakpan na ng dilim
ang daan pauwi

pagod na ang paang
halos 'di na maihakbang
sa lamig ng hangin

ambigat-bigat na
ng talukap ng mga mata
at balikat

tinatanaw ang ilaw
sa bintana ng bahay
ngunit malayo pa

inaasam nang makarating
para makapagpahinga
sa naghihintay nang higaan

kung makatulog ako
sana magising na ako
na nasa kandungan mo o dyos

twilight of life

six o'clock
hidden by darkness
is the road home

tired are the feet
almost unable to stride
due to the coldness of the wind

really heavy
are the lids of my eyes
and shoulders

watching for the light
from the window of the house
but it's still far away

hoping to arrive
so as to rest
in the awaiting bed

if I fall asleep
i wish I'd wake up
on your lap o god

lingaw

Onkeketket so betel
Na kabuasan ed laman ko
Ag ni naaninag so arin agew
Dia'd kapal na linaew
Ya akabilkag ed tutumboken
Kon daan a dalan
Say kanonotan et oala'd sika

Say kuan da 'man
Ag ka makasabi ed laen mo
No ag mo amta so onlingaw
Ed nanlapuan mo
Tan no maminsan
Kanepegan so ompaoil
Laut la no oala'y manaalagar

Kanian nia ak natan
masibeg ya ompaoil
lapu'd amtak ya oala kan
sabien

lingon

Kumakagat ang lamig
Ng umaga sa laman ko
'di pa maaaninag ang haring araw
Sa kapal ng hamog
Na nakalatag sa tinutumbok
Kong lumang daan
Ang isip ay nasa 'iyo

Sabi nila noon
Di ka makakarating sa pupuntahan
Kung 'di mo alam ang lumingon
Sa pinanggalingan mo
At minsan
Responsibilidad ang pagbalik
Lalo na kapag may naghihintay

Kaya heto ako ngayon
Matapang na bumabalik
Dahil alam ko na and'yan kang
Dadatnan

look back

The cold is biting
In my flesh this morning
You still can't see the sun king
Due to the thick fog
Spread out in the my tracks
Of an old path
My thoughts are on you

Long ago, they say
You can't reach your destination
If you don't know how to look back
To the place where you came from
And sometimes
It's your responsibility to return
Especially when someone's waiting

That's why here I am now
Bravely returning
Because I know that you're there
To come upon

Santo Tomas High School
(STHS 1983-1987)

i.
sanlibo siam a lasus oalumplo tan talo
kumaduan simba
odino kapegleya'y bulan na hunio
unaan ya agew ed pinablin aoiran
ambasa so dikan dadakatan
ag niaraoi say maistran manantandag
ed sikamin manbabagot na dikan sisipot
say matak balet oala ed saray andirit
manektekiab a singa manpapaniring
na antokaman ya onsabi

ii.
linmabas ira'y bulan
ritual la so tepet sa *St. Thomas?*
tan say ebat ya *Pray for us!*
no gapo la na klasi

ag met apalna so kumpisar
kada unaan a biernes ed bulan
insulat la'd melag a papil
so listaan na kasalanan
tan saray dasal a Manisia Ak
Ama Mi tan Ave Maria
maong labat agi ta alioan salitan Latin

Santo Tomas High School
(STHS 1983-1987)

i.
isang libo siyam na raan walumpo't tatlo
ikalawang linggo
o kaya'y kalagitnaan ng buwan ng hunyo
unang araw sa minamahal na paaralan
basa ang damong inaapakan
'di kalayuan ang gurong sumusulyap
sa aming nagbubunot ng amorseko
ngunit ang mga mata ko'y nasa mga tutubi
lumilipad na tila nagbababala
sa anumang darating

ii.
lumabas ang mga buwan
ritwal na ang tanong na *St. Thomas?*
at ang sagot na *Pray for us!*
'pag simula na ng klase

'di rin napigil ang kumpisal
Kada unang biyernes ng buwan
sinulat na sa maliit na papel
ang listahan ng kasalanan
at ang mga dasal na Sumasampalataya
Ama Namin at Ave Maria
buti nalang talaga't 'di salitang Latin

Santo Tomas High School
(STHS 1983-1987)

i.
one thousand nine hundred eighty three
second week
or in the middle of the month of june
first day at the beloved school
the treaded grass are wet
not far from here is the teacher peering
at us who are picking *amorseko*
but mga eyes are on the dragonflies
flying like they're warning us
on anything that might come

ii.
months passed by
the question *St. Thomas?* is now a ritual
and the answer *Pray for us!*
At the start of class

Confessionals we're stopped either
Every first Friday of every month
I wrote on a small piece of paper
A list of sins
And the prayers *Sumasampalataya*
Ama Namin and *Ave Maria*
Thank goodness they're not in Latin

iii.

no oras na risis
amungkug kami la
diman ed beneg na iskuilaan
kaoalaan da'ra'y managlako na kakanen:
kiniler sago inlambong a ponti
dinekdekan o giniling a kahoy

iv.

diman ka met makanengneng
na mansasanking mantatatsing
tan manbubuntayog
no maminsan bangta alioan laos
oala so ponitian

v.

dia ed klasi
bida ka no maong so impanlupam
bida ka no maong so impanolum
bida ka no maong kan manlastug
bida ka met no dakel sa karga na bulsam
lalo kan bida no kabusol ka na maistra
ono mabetbet ka'd opisina na prinsipal

iii.

'pag oras ng reses
kumpul-kumpol na kami
doon sa likod ng paaralan
sa kinarorooan ng mga nagtitinda ng
kakanin:
bilo-bilo sago nilagang saging
nilupak o giniling na kahoy

iv.

doon ka rin makakakita
ng naglalaro ng teks nagtatantsing
at nagkacara y cruz
'pag minsan bagamat 'di madalas
mayroong suntukan

v.

sa klase
bida ka 'pag maganda ang itsura mo
bida ka 'pag maayos ang pangangasiwa
mo
bida ka 'pag magaling kang magyabang
bida ka rin 'pag maraming laman ang
bulsa mo
lalo kang bida 'pag kinaiinisan ka ng guro
o 'pag madalas ka sa opisina ng punong-
guro

iii.

come recess time
we're already clustered
there at the back of the school
where the vendors of sweatmeats are:
bilo-bilo sago boiled banana
nilupak or *giniling na kahoy*

iv.

there you'll also see
those playing *teks tantsing*
and *cara y cruz*
sometimes, although not often
there are fist fights

v.

in class
you're a hero if you look good
you're a hero if you're a good leader
you're a hero if you're a braggart
you're a hero if your pockets are full
you'll be more of a hero if the teacher
hates you
or you're always at the principal's office

vi.

junior-senior prom

say kuan da sikatoya so sankaliketan
ya tekap na bilay ed hayskul
para ed siak tila labat itan
ten tetetelen ko ima'y lasin maistro
ya angibaga'y manbarong kami no *JS Prom*

singa kami laingen impasak ed yorungan
makakaibeg ed kaklasin
akasolong na *chaquita*
kinapalan la so lupa makasayaw labat
ed paboriton sonata
say aral:
no maminsan alioan maong
so onor-onor ed matatakken

vii.

makapanangnangis man
tan makapalek so adalan ed dakulap mo
sakey ak ya angaro ed sika
ag makalingoan ed saray simbaoa tan
bangat mo
no natandagan la'y arapan mo
no nanunotan la'y ngaran mo
ag ko nayaria'y ag mangansion

vi.

junior-senior prom

sabi nila ito ang pinakamasaya
na parte ng buhay sa hayskul
para sakin kasinungalingan lang 'yan
at sinisisi ko 'yung lintik na guro
na nagsabing magbarong kami 'pag *JS Prom*

para tuloy kaming pinako sa upuan
naiinggit sa kaklaseng
nakasuot ng chaketa
kinapalan na ang mukha makasayaw lang
sa paboritong sonata
ang aral:
'pag minsan 'di mabuti
ang susunud-sunod sa matatanda

vii.

nakakaiyak man
at nakakatawa ang napadaan sa palad mo
isa akong nagmahal sa iyo
'di makakalimot sa mga payo at turo mo
'pag nasulyapan na ang harapan mo
'pag naalala na ang pangalan mo
'di ko kayang hindi kumanta

vi.

junior-senior prom

they say this is the happiest
part of highschool life
for me this is a lie
and I blame that freaking teacher
who told us to wear *barong* at JS Prom
we were nailed to our seat
jealous of our classmate
wearing a jacket
we put on a face just so we could dance
on our favorite song
the lesson:
sometimes it's not a good thing
following our elder's orders

vii.

whether it makes you cry
or laugh whatever passed your palms
I was one who loved you
I won't forget your advices and teachings
When I see your façade
When I remember your name
I can't help but sing

ono mantareren na:

*“by the way side we thee behold
thy citadel of learning pure...
o hear thy sway Santo Tomas High...”*

bales

Sikayo ‘ran atateng na atateng ko
Dabuk la’d pagew nen aman Adan
Ag ko amta so impan-anlong yo
Ag ko amta no anton salita yo binitla
No iner tan no panon you insulat
Irama’y daan a kakabatan

Ag ko met amta no panon yo apaesel
Maaro yo ‘ran mamarikit
Nayarin impanengneng yo
So inakalaki ed panagbalsig na kiew
Ono anilbin managasul na danum
..ayari met ya indalan yo’d lastog
Seseg tan agay la’y samit a dila
No ag yo indalan ed masanton pelesan

Lalon ag ko amta no akin
Insalat yo so pinablin dalin
Ed sankaterter a dala’n Kastila
Tinamalimokor kayo’d saray santan
Romano
Gaoa labat ed kiew ono bato

o humaginit ng:

*“by the way side we thee behold
thy citadel of learning pure...
o hear thy sway Santo Tomas High...”*

higanti

Kayong mga magulang ng mga magulang
ko
Alikabok na sa dibdib ni amang Adan
Di ko alam ang pinangtula niyo
Di ko alam kung sa anong salita niyo
sinambit
Kung saan at kung paano niyo sinulat
Ang mga lumabng kaisipan

Di ko rin alam kung paano niyo napasagot
Mapagmahal niyong mga dalaga
Maaaring ipinakita niyo
Ang pagkalalaki sa pagbiyak ng kahoy
O kaya’y nanilbing magsasalok ng tubig
..pwede ring idinaan niyo sa yabang
Sipag at talaga namang matamis na dila
Kung di niyo idinaan sa santong paspasan

Lalong di ko alam kung bakit
Pinalit niyo ang mahal na lupa
Sa isang patak ng dugong Kastila
Yumukod kayo sa mga santong Romano
Gawa lang sa kahoy o kaya’y bato

Or hum:

*“by the way side we thee behold
Thy citadel of learning pure...
O hear thy sway Santo Tomas High...”*

revenge

You parents of my parents
Dust in the torso of father Adam
I don’t know how you versed
I don’t know in which language you spoke
Where and how you wrote
The old principles

I also don’t know how you made them
yours

Your loving maidens
Maybe you showed them
Your manliness by chopping wood
Or served them by fetching water
..you might have used cockiness
Diligence and excessively sweet tongue
If you didn’t use fast means

I especially don’t know why
You exchanged your beloved land
For a single drop of Spanish blood
You bowed down to Roman saints
Made of wood or stone

Sikara balet a dayo angamkam
Nilames da ni so bibii yo

Insapuso yo so libron sengegan
Na impakalingoan yo'd saray ngara-
ngaran
Na abangonan yo 'ran dios
A singa si Ama-Gaoley

Nia ak balet natan ay!
Pilit kon totuntunen so dalan
Paunla ed nanlapuan yo
Krus ya ingulis ed muling ko
Taoir a kasalanan nanlapu'd sikayo

Anggapo'y oala no maksil
So basis yo'd kanonotan ko
Manlapu'd natan basis ak met
Tan balon silew a manangipanunot
Ed saray manumtumbok ed siak
Angga'd say amalsan kataoan
Itan to ak la'y kareenan

Basis ak met a mangablit
Ed kanonotan da'ra'y balon umaanlong
A singa ipangabli yo'd kanonotan ko
Basis ak met ya mangistorbo ed sikara
A singa impangistorbo yo'd kugip ko
Dia ed kaaralema'y labi. . .
Dia ed kaaralema'y labi. . .

Sila perong mga dayo nangamkam
Inabuso pa pati mga babae niyo

Isinapuso niyo ang librong sanhi
Ng pagkalimot niyo sa mga pangalan
Ng nabangunan niyong mga diyos
Tulad ni Ama-Gaoley

Heto pero ako ngayon!
Pilit na tinutunton ang daan
Papunta sa pinagmulan niyo
Krus na iginuhit sa noo ko
Mana ng kasalanan mula sa inyo

Walang anuman kung malakas
Ang boses niyo sa isip ko
Mula ngayon basis din ako
At bagong ilaw na magpapaalala
Sa mga sumusunod sa akin
Hanggang sa ang dios na may lalang
Bigyan na nia ako ng katahimikan

Boses din akong mangangalabit
Sa isip nga mga bagong manunula
Na tulad ng ipinangalabit niyo sa isip ko
Boses din ako na mangiistorbo sa kanila
Na tulad ng ipinangistorbo niyo sa
panaginip ko
Sa kalaliman ng gabi. . .
Sa kalaliman ng gabi. . .

But those newcomers usurped
And abused your women

You learned by heart the book that caused
Your oblivion to the names
Of your previous gods
Like Ama-Gaoley

But here I am now!
Trying to track the road
Leading to your origin
Cross painted on my forehead
Inherited sin from you

It doesn't matter if loud
Is your voice in my head
From now on I'm a voice too
And new light that will remind
Those following me
Until god the creator
Gives me my silence

I'm also a voice that will poke at
The minds of the new poets
Like the way you poked my mind
I'm also a voice that will disturb them
Like the way you disturbed my dreams
In the middle of the night. . .
In the middle of the night. . .

dia ed uma

singa no sakey ya ogaw
pinalabas ko'y oras ya ombabatik
tatandagan ira'y бага-bagan mantetekiab
tan nanduruman lupa na lurem
angob na kapan-anin pagey
so sibok na dagem

ipipintak ed kanonotan
so nanenengneng na mata:
kaabungan ed gilig na alog
totoon ag ko la nabirbir so lupa
tinmatalimokor a talaib
tinmeteoek a kaoayan
akapagor a dueg
manbagtik iran ogugaw
tan sayan alenleneg ya galusa
ed silong na akasia
no iner sikan pinabli
aka-ogip la'd akualan ko

sa bukid

tila isang bata
pinalabas ko ang oras na tumatakbo
tinatanaw ang mga saranggolang lumilipad
at magkakaibang mukha ng ulap
amoy ng bagong-aning palay
ang ihip ng hangin

ipinipinta ko sa isipan
ang mga nakikita ng mata:
kabahayan sa gilid ng parang
mga taong 'di ko na makilala ang mukha
nagsisiluhurang mga talahib
nagsisiyukuang mga kawayan
nakataling kalabaw
nagtatakbuhan mga bata
at itong nag-iisang kariton
sa silong ng akasia
kung saan ikaw mahal
nakatulog na sa kandungan ko

in the field

Like a child
I let the time pass running
Peering at the flying kites
And different faces of clouds
Smells of freshly harvested rice
Is the breeze

I'm painting in my mind
What the eyes can see:
Houses at the side of the meadow
People whose faces I couldn't recognize
kneeling cogon grass
bowing bamboo stems
tethered carabao
running children
and this one cart
at the base of the acacia
where you my love
have slept in my lap

pito'ran haiku

1.
Panag-ani la
Balitok la'y kolor
Na kaalugan
2.
Manuk a taras
Ed amagan sanga
Niman tinmekiab!
3.
Genggeng pakol
Sinibar na nganak
Nen nampalinat
4.
Apaktak
Ed kasil na dagem
Obong na anuyiao
5.
Maksil ya uran
Asabat ko ed dalan
Paunla'd baybay

Pitong haiku

1.
Pag-aani na
Ginto na'ng kulay
Ng kabukiran
2.
Ibon na maya
Sa magang sanga
Ayun lumipad!
3.
Gagambang bukol
Sinugod ng manok
Nang nagpalinat
4.
Nalaglag
Sa lakas ng hangin
Pugad ng maya
5.
Malakas na ulan
Nadatnan ko sa daan
Papuntang baybay

Seven haikus

1.
Harvest time
Gold is the color
Of the fields
2.
Maya bird
On the dry branch
There, it flew!
3.
Spider bump
Chased by the hen
When it weaved
4.
It fell
'cause of the wind
A maya's nest
5.
Heavy rain
I faced on the path
On the way to the shore

6.

Bonga'y bayaoas
Naplag ed pitek\
Nen binasibas

7.

Sibek na ogaw...
Tareren na ina
Ed pegley labi

6.

Bunga ng bayabas
Nahulog sa putik
Nang hinampas

7.

Hikbi ng bata...
Hum ng ina
Sa hating-gabi

6.

Fruit of the guava
Fell in the mud
When thwacked

7.

sob of a child...
Hum of the mother
At midnight

Ermita

Oala'ya'y dalan a balioen
Oangalan looban tan paoayan
Tan oala'ra'y mararakep iran nanengneng
Liket na mata no sika et ogaw ni

Oala'ra'y aroen
Oala'ra'y taynan tan paoilen
Tan oala'ra met so ikutkut ed lingoan

Angga'd onsabi la so oras
Say balioen a dalan
Singa la dayat ed kaaoangan
Kaput la'ra'y oangala
Tan sinmaoa ono naksaoan
La'y matan mannenengneng

Tan say panangaro
Linmabas lan singa agew
Na impanbilay mo
Ed paupaan a kuarto
Dia'd sokong na Ermita

Ermita

May mga daang tatawiran
Bukana, looban at labasan
At may mga magagandang tinitignan
Saya ng mata kapag ika'y bata pa

May mga mamahalin
May mga iiwan at babalikan
At mayroon ding mga binabaon sa limot

Hanggang sa dumating ang oras
Ang tatawirang daan
Para nang dagat sa lawak
Sarado na ang mga bukana
At nagsawa o kaya'y napagod
Na ang matang tumitingin

At ang pagmamahal
Lumabas nang tila araw
Ng ikinabuhay mo
Sa paupahan na kuarto
Sa sulok ng Ermita

Ermita

There are roads you cross
Entrances, alleys and exits
And there are beautiful sights
Joy for the eyes if you're still a kid

There are things you will love
There are things you will leave and come
back to
And there are things too that you bury to
oblivion

Until the time comes
The road you cross
Is like a sea in wideness
The entrances are already closed
And tired or exhausted
Are the sight-seeing eyes

And affection
Rose like the sun
Of your lifetime
In the rented room
In the corner of Ermita

Sikaran laoanan

Manaayam ira
Ed pinabalingitan ya tanamanan
Pilit a lilingoanan so linmabas iran agew
Singa'ra kulalatnit no labi
Kakaoananen da so limgas tan gana-gana
Ed asagmakan ya dalan
Tan nanduruman dukulan
Nabibilay ira
Ed sankaraan ya anapan
Say arum ed sikara
Makalmo na balitok
Say arum nayaran narumog da so Dyus
Say arum o karaklan
Nalegep ed pitek

Sila na nakalimot

Tumitira sila
Sa pinabangong halamanan
Pilit na kinakalimutan ang lumabas na
mga araw
Tila sila mga paniki sa gabi
Pinanghihinayangan nila ang linis at ganda
Sa nadatnan na daan
At iba't ibang higaan
Nabubuhay sila
Sa lumang pamumuhay
Ang iba sa kanila
Makakahanap ng ginto
Ang iba maaaring mahanap nila ang Diyos
Ang iba o karamihan
Malulunod sa putik

They who have forgotten

They live
In the scented bushes
Trying to forget the days passed
They are like bats in the night
Regretting the cleanliness and beauty
In the road they knew
And in different beds
They are living
In the old way of life
Some of them
Will find gold
Other might find God
Others or most of them
Will drown in mud

Ibolusion

Engas ak ya manletletaw
Ed birbo tan dagem
Sakbay a linmesa
So syensia tan manamalsa

Engas ak ya nagmaliw a bilay
Sinmakbit a nanlapu ed dayat na Abirni

Kinmurong
Inmalagey
Nansalita
Nanarian so dalin
Nanggaoa na sibilisasion
Piraoat a manbilay na andi angaan

Maksil so pananisian
Oala'y taoen. . .
Anggano dabuk ak labat
Ed palar na bilay
Dia ed sayan sansinakub

Ibolusyon

Hininga akong naghihingalo
Sa daigdig at hangin
Nang lumitaw
Ang siyensia at manlilikha

Hininga ako na nagmaliw na buhay
Lumangoy sa pampang na galing sa dagat
na
Abirni

Gumapang
Tumayo
Nagsalita
Naghari sa lupa
Gumawa ng sibilisasyon
Inaasam na mabuhay ng walang hanggan

Malakas ang paniniwala
Mayroong langit. . .
Kahit alikabok lang ako
Sa palad ng buhay
Dito sa mundong ito

Evolution

I am breath suffocating
In the universe and wind
When came
The sciences and the creator

I am breath that became life
Swam to the shore from the sea of
Abirni

Crawled
Stood
Spoke
Reigned the land
Built a civilization
Hoping to live forevermore

Strong is my faith
There is heaven. . .
Even if I'm just ashes
In the palm of life
Here in this world

Patanir

Inumen ko so dala nen Bacchus
Dia ed sayan labi inaro
Pian naandi ka ed kanonotan ko
Sikan angekal na kasalanan
Na bibil ko dia'd panamegley na angob
Tan maandon panangaro

Ilaok ko ed niktar a pinespes
Ed olat na abuek iran Satir
So alak ya inumen
Angga'd nalener ak ed kekep
Tan kaoalan

Singa no patey ya akamulagat
No ag la naipinta ed kugip
So mauyamon lupam

Sigi la
Bolos ka
Taynan mo layan manangaro

Onsabi'y agew
Nalingoanan a siansia
So ngaran mo pinabli
So pakanonotan ya intilak mo

Nalingoanan kon siansia
A singa pakalingoan ko

Paalam

Inum ko ang dugo ni Bacchus
Dito sa gabing ito mahal
Para mabura sa isip ko
Ikaw na nagtanggap ng kasalanan
Sa labi ko sa pamamagitan ng halik
At pag-ibig na walang hanggan

Ihahalo ko sa nectar na piniga
Sa ugat ng lasing na mga Satir
Ang alak na iinumin
Hanggang sa malunod ako sa espasyo
At kawalan

Tila patay na nakadilat
Kapag 'di na maipinta sa panaginip
Ang maamo mong mukha

Sige na
Kumawala ka
Iwan mo na itong nagmamahal

Dadating ang araw
Malilimutan rin
Ang pangalan mo mahal
Ang mga ala-alang iniwan mo

Malilimutan rin
Tulad ng pagkalimot ko

Goodbye

I wil drink the blood of Bacchus
Here tonight my love
To wipe from my mind
You who took away sin
From my lips in the form of a kiss
And love everlasting

I will mix in with the extracted nectar
With the veins of drunken Satyrs
The wine I will drink
Until I drown in void
And nothingness

I'm like an open-eyed corpse
When I can never paint in my dreams
Your gentle face

Go ahead
Be free
Leave this lover be

Time will come
I'll be able to forget
Your name my love
The memories you left behind

I'll be able to forget
Like the way I forgot

Ed saya'y onlabas iran mamauran

Kareenan

(dua'ran salming na bilonget)

Kareenan
Salming na bilonget
Sakbay a pinalsa na Dyos
So lioaoa tan say dalin
A nagmaliw a laman
Nen isibok to so ngaran to
Ed muling nen Adan

Kareenan
Salming na bilonget
No say Dyus ya amalsa
Et erepen to la so lioaoa
Say laman ya initda'y bilay
Magmaliw lan dabuk
Tan isibok na dagem
Ed dalin a nanlapuan

Dito sa mga susunod na mga pag-ulan

Katahimikan

(dalawang salamin ng dilim)

Katahimikan
Salamin ng dilim
Nang nilalang ng Diyos
Ang liwanag at ang lupa
Na nagmaliw na laman
Nang hinipan niya ang pangalan niya
Sa noo ni Adan

Katahimikan
Salamin ng dilim
Kapag ang Diyos na lumikha
Ay papatayin na niya ang liwanag
Ang laman na binigyan ng buhay
Magmamaliw na alikabok
At hihipan ng hangin
Sa lupang pinagmulan

These coming rainy days

Silence

(two mirrors of darkness)

Silence
Mirror of darkness
When God created
The light and the land
That became flesh
When he blew his name
On Adam's forehead

Silence
Mirror of darkness
When God the creator
Switches off the light
The flesh that was given life
Will become dust
And will be swept away by the wind
Into the land where it came from

Balikas ya anggapo'y litra
(para ed si Doris Senen)

Abitla nen saman ed sika
Onsabi so panaon
Magmaliw ak ya umaanlong
Nayarin alingoanan mo la

Say ag mo amta
Abalikas iman a salita
Ta oala kan ligloia
Na kanonotan

Pinabli so kalakal tan ogalim
Pinabli so mauyamon lupam
Balet say maandon panangarom
Ed amalsan kataoan
So angiter na leetan
Ya kaaoang na dalin
Tan taoen

Aliling ko'y sakey a baga
Ag makatekiab
Anggano lukas so pangaoan

Dia'd saraman ya agew
Maliket so puso
Labay ko'y mansulat na dangoan
Pian oala'y pakanonotan mo'd siak
Balet asabia'y ngiras

Berso na walang letra
(para kay Doris Senen)

Nasabi ko noon sa'yo
Dadating ang panahon
Magmamaliw akong manunula
Maaaring nalimutan mo na

Ang 'di mo alam
Nasambit ang mga salitang 'yon
Dahil meron kang ligaya
Ng isipan

Minahal ang sipag at ugali
Minahal ang maamo mong mukha
Ngunit ang walang hanggang pag-ibig
Sa diyos na manlilikha
Ang nagbigay ng awang
Na kasinlawak ng lupa
At langit

Tulad ako ng isang saranggola
'di makalipad
Kahit bukas ang kulungan

Sa mga araw na iyon
Maligaya ang puso
Gusto kong magsulat ng kanta
Para may magpapaalala sakín sayo
Ngunit dinatnan ng katamaran

Verses without letters
(for Doris Senen)

I've told you once before
There will come a time
I will become a poet
You might have forgotten

What you don't know
I said those words
Because you were the joy
Of my thoughts

I loved your diligence and ways
I loved your gentle face
But your everlasting love
To god the creator
Is what gave these cracks
That is as wide as the land
And skies

I am like a kite
I can't fly
Even if the cage is open

In those days
My heart was glad
I wanted to write a song
To remind you of me
But struck by laziness

Alingoanan so singaoey na laineng
Labay ko'y mansulat na anlong
Ni iner ipakabat ed sika
So liknaan tan panangaro
Bang balet nen asumpal lan insalin
So tinta ed papil
Anggapo ka la

Kanian natan
Ayan balikas anggapo'y litra
No alioan sika so mangisalita

Nalimutan ko tuloy ang tinig
Gusto kong magsulat ng tula
Kung saan ipapaalam ko sayo
Ang nararamdaman at pagmamahal
Ngunit nang matapos kong isalin
Ang tinta sa papel
Wala ka na

Kaya ngayon
Itong mga berso walang letra
Kapag hindi ikaw ang magbabasa

I forgot the melody
I want to write a poem
Where I'll show you
My feelings and love
But when I finished setting in
The ink on paper
You were gone

So now
These verses are without letters
If you're not the one reading

Uliran ed pigaran baley ed Pangasinan

1.
Si Pedro ya sankategteg
Toon agay la'y biskeg
Agpit to'y dua'ran lasong
Angga'd man ed baley a Tolong

2.
Si laki Piliyas aman
Taga diman ed Binalatongan
Sikara kono et oala'y kakabatan
No manpastol na dueg
Dia'd tuktok na kakaoayanan

3.
Si Kapitan Tiago na Mangatarem
Ag tabla'y antokaman a tarem
Ag ka manpapasirayew
Ta no sika'y naponiti
Duplak kan singa sengeg na ponti

4.
Dia'd baley a San Carlos
Karaklan na totoo nen saman dumaralos
Et no ikasibeg so pangtotongtongan
Ag mo ilastog diman
No alioa kan amputi'y layag
Ta ag ka manbayag

Alamat sa ilang bayan sa Pangasinan

1.
Si Pedrong maliit
Taong malakas
Bitbit ang dalawang malaking pandikdik
Hanggang doon sa bayan ng Tolong

2.
Si lolo Piliyas
Taga doon sa Binalatongan
Sila daw ay may kaalaman
Kapag magpapastol ng baka
Doon sa tuktok ng mga kawayan

3.
Si Kapitan Tiago ng Mangatarem
Di tinatablan ng kahit anong talim
Wag kang magyayabang
Dahil 'pag ika'y sinuntok
Basag kang parang puno ng saging

4.
Sa bayan ng San Carlos
Karamihan ng tao doon ay magsasaka
Kapag katapangan ang pinaguusapan
Wag mong ipagyayabang doon
Kung hindi ka puting tenga
Dahil di ka magtatagal

Legends in some towns in Pangasinan

1.
Pedro who is small
A person who's very strong
Carrying two large pestles
All the way to the town of Tolong

2.
Grandpa Piliyas
Lives in Binalatongan
They have powers
When they shepherded cows
On top of the bamboos

3.
Captain Tiago of Mangatarem
No blade can penetrate him
Don't go boasting
Because if you get punched
You'll be broken like a banana tree

4.
In the town of San Carlos
Many of the people are farmers
When it comes to braveness
Don't go boasting there
If you not white eared
Because you won't last long

5.
Oala'y uliran nen saman
Dia'd baley a Mangaldan
Si Tomas a tulisan
Nilooan to'y daan a simbaan
Nen takeoen to'y koronan balitok
Inusilan na singa'ra butayong a kamontok
Say pobrin kaoatan
Binaliw to'y ilog na Angalacan
Nansumpal lam lamang dia'd pangaoan

6.
Paunla ed Mapandan
Oala'y dalan a nansangaan
Diman naimatunan nen bai Marin
Parada da'ra'y dika'y dalin
Imanum ira'y ayep akateoek
Unalagey ira'y bagu tan buek
No narengal la'y rakatag na tambol
Mandepa kan tampol
Pian ag da ka samaren
Say olum ag da kalaaiten
Say kamareruam ag da aaiten

7.
Atongtong nen bai Pinang
Nen marikit ni ed Bayambang
Kinaraw na tikbalang
Aminsan asabian nen ama ra

5.
May mga kasabihan noon
Sa bayan ng Mangaldan
Si Tomas na tulisan
Pinasok ang lumang simbahan
Nang nanakawin na niya ang koronang
ginto
Hinabol siya na parang binabato
Ang pobreng magnanakaw
Tinawid niya ang ilog ng Angalacan
Nagtapos rin lang sa kulungan

6.
Papunta sa Mapandan
May daang nagsasangaan
Doon napansin ni lola Marin
Parade ng mga damo ng lupa
Pansinin ang mga hayop nakayuko
Tatayo ang balahibo at buhok
Kapag narinig na ang rakatag ng tambol
Tumakbo na agad
Para din ka susunduin
Ang ulo mo di kakalawitin
Ang kaluluwa mo di dadalin

7.
Nakwento ni lola Pinang
Noong dalaga pa sa Bayambang
Niligawan ng tikbalang
Minsan, nadatnan ng ama niya

5.
There are adages long ago
In the town of Mangaldan
Tomas the bandit
Went inside the old church
When he's about to take the golden crown
They chased him with rocks
The poor bandit
Crossed the Angalacan river
But still ended up in jail

6.
On the way to Mapandan
There's a branched out road
There lola Marin noticed
The parade of the grass of earth
Notice the animals are bowing
Your hairs will stand on end
When you hear the sound of the drums
Immediately run
So they won't take you
You're head they won't cut off
You're soul they won't get a hold of

7.
Grandma Pinang told us
When she's a young lady in Bayambang
A tikbalang courted her
One day, her father found out

Ima'y lasin tikbalang
Inusilan da'y barang

Angindat si laki balet
Inmalagey tan impanengneng
Sankarangan a piglat to'd ebet

Yong lintik na tikbalang
Hinabol ng bolo

Kumindat si lolo pero
Tumayo at pinakita
Isang takal na peklat niya sa pwet

About the freaking tikbalang
He chased it with a machete

But grandpa winked
Stood up and showed us
A hand-sized scar on his butt

Dia'd pagew na Cordillera

Naandi la so bilonget
 Ya akabalabar ed bulan
 Singa no ermen da'ra'y biteoen
 Ira'y matan manantandag
 Ed saray aninon nababalang
 Ed masukal a dalan paunla'd
 Sakey ya amut a sipanan

Aminsan

Say gatin na sali ra labat
 So narengel kada kabuasan
 Aoi-aoit da'y araro alioan armas
 Linget alioan dala so onteterter
 Ed apoolan dan katat
 Tan naksaoan a laman

Anton pasnuk so mandarlang
 Dia ed pagew da
 Kanian sikara natan et singa no
 Barbaron ag makalikna'y sugat
 Na salita tan ketket na betel?

Nabuas

Dia ed pugaro – kalbaryo
 Da'ra'y kayomanggin sinturion
 Nanengneng ira so tanda
 Anggapo'y ngaran o pakanonotan
 Saray dikan balang labat
 Tan manuk ya atap so akapan-abuloy

Sa dibdib ng Cordillera

Nawawala na ang dilim
 Na bumabalot sa buwan
 Tila dalamhati ng mga bituin
 Ang mga matang sumisilip
 Sa mga aninong nawawala
 Sa masukal na daan papuntang
 Isang tagong pangako

Minsan

Ang yapak ng paa lang nila
 Ang maririnig tuwing umaga
 Dala-dala nila'y araro hindi armas
 Pawis hindi dugo ang tumutulo
 Sa sunog nilang balat
 At pagod na katawan

Anong galit ang umaalab

Sa dibdib nila
 Kaya sila ngayon ay tila
 Barbaro na 'di makaramdam ng sugat
 Ng salita at kagat ng lamig?

Bukas

Doon sa bukid – kalbaryo
 Ng mga kayumangging sinturion
 Makikita ang mga tanda
 Walang pangalan o alaala
 Ang mga damo lamang
 At ibon na mailap ang nakapag-abuloy

In the heart of Cordillera

Fading is the darkness
 That cloaks the moon
 It's like the stars' mourning
 The eyes searching
 At the missing shadows
 In the filthy road leading to
 A hidden promise

Sometimes

Only the sounds of their feet
 Are heard every morning
 They're carrying plows not guns
 Sweat not blood is trickling
 On their burnt skin
 And tired body

What anger roars

In their hearts
 So they're now like
 Barbarians who can't feel the pain
 Of words and bite of the cold?

Tomorrow

In the fields – terror
 For the brown-skinned centurions
 We will see the marks
 No name or memory
 Only the grass
 And a wild bird who has given an offering

Na dasal antis iran inkutkut
Ed lingoan

Bini

(para ed say Ulupan na Pansiansia'y
Salitan Pangasinan tan saray mansusulat
ed abangonan a salita)

Isibuag tayo'd intiron luyag
Saksakey akup a binin bokel
No oala'y ontubo ed saraya
Itanem ed mabuna ya dalin
Pian ombaleg iran mabulaslas
No nambonga lara et burburen
Pilien so nayaran binien
Tiponen angga ed naparakel

Onya komun so gaoaen tayo
Ed litiratura'y Pangasinan
Isulat – payamanen so porma
Imahin tan say ritorika to
Tan uksoyen ed antolohiya
Ipaamta ed saray karaklan
Say bilay na sakey a salita
Oala'd mabunan litiratura

Ng dasal bago sila ibinaon
Sa limot

Binhi

(para sa Ulupan na pansiansia'y Salitan
Pangasinan at sa mga nagsusulat sa
nabangunang salita)

Ikalat natin sa buong pinagmulan
Nagiisang dakot na binhing buto
Kapag may tumubo sa mga ito
Itanim sa malusog na lupa
Para lumaki silang masagana
Kapag namunga na sila ay aanihin
Pipiliin ang maaaring ipatuyo
Titipunin hanggang sa maparami

Ganito sana ang gawin natin
Sa literatura ng Pangasinan
Isulat – payamanin ang porma
Imahen at ang retorika nito
At ayusin sa antolohiya
Ipaalam sa karamihan
Ang buhay ng isang salita
Nasa masaganang literatura

Of prayer before they were buried
Into oblivion

Seed

(for the Association for the Preservation of
the Pangasinan Language and to the
writers of their mother tongue)

Let's spread on our entire homeland
A handful of seedlings
If some of them grows
Let's plant them on fertile soil
So they'll grow abundantly
When they bear fruit let's harvest
Choose those we could let dry
Gather until we harvest many

I hope this is what we do
To the literature of Pangasinan
Write – enrich its form
Its imagery and rhetoric
And arrange into anthology
Make known to many
That the life of a language
Is in an abundant literature

Konbilay

(para ed si Alberto M. Villafania)

Naimanok so liket na mata yo
 Nen anunotan ko'y sinmempet
 Antis na pigaran bulan
 Liknak balet so irap yo
 No nayari labat ya akoen ko la

Naandi la'y kasil na laman
 pabes la'y maksil a bosis

ag ko la amta no kapigan
 ima'y samput ya impantongtong tayo
 tinepet ko no oala'y amta yo 'ran anlong
 odino karaan iran kansion

kuan yo alingoanan yo la 'ra
 nantareren tan angansion kayo balet
 na dangoan na sakey ya ompetek

*masurin tua'y kawayan
 ta no melag ni et isanglaw
 no baleg la et isaklang
 kalaben da'ra'y kumakaraw*

*linma ak dia kalabian
 tinoor ko'y sipanan
 amidua ak lan sinmegam
 pitaoey mo'y ondungaw*

Aking buhay

(para kay Alberto M. Villafania)

Napansin ko ang saya sa mata niyo
 Nang maalala kong umuwi
 Bago ang ilang buwan
 Nararamdaman ko pero ang hirap niyo
 Kung pwede lang na akuhin ko na

Wala na ang lakas ng laman niyo
 paos na ang malakas na boses

Di ko alam kung kalian
 Ang huli nating pag-uusap
 Tinanung ko kung may alam kayong tula
 O kaya'y lumang mga kanta

Sabi niyo nalimutan niyo na
 humaginit at kumanta pero kayo
 Ng kanta ng isa na humaharana

*Kapakipakinabang na totoo ang kawayan
 'pag maliit pa'y ilalaga
 'pag malaki na'y gagawing poste
 Inaakyat ng mga manliligaw*

*Pumunta ako dito kagabi
 Tinupad ko ang pangako
 Pangalawang beses na 'kong umubo
 Inaasam na ika'y dumungaw*

My life

(for Alberto M. Villafania)

I noticed the joy in your eyes
 When I remembered to come home
 For a few months
 But I felt your suffering
 If only I could take all your pain

The strength of your body is no more
 hoarse is your loud voice

I don't know when
 Our last dialogue was
 I asked if you knew any poems
 Or old songs

You said you've forgotten them all
 But you hummed and sang
 A song of one who is serenading

*The bamboo is truly useful
 In its youth, you boil it
 In its maturity, you make a post
 Climbed by suitors*

*I went here last night
 I went by our promise
 This is my second time to cough
 I was hoping you'd look out the window*

*nen siak so apasnukan
ginoyor ko'y takayan
dinalolos ko'y dukulan
tinongtong ko'y kabaliksan*

*say kuan mo ya inmebat
"ag ka dia bengat-bengat
No nasabian to ka nen amak
Ag ko amta so gaoaen to'd siak"*

*Ibagam ed kinen amam
Ta sikamin dua'y manbakal
Ag kami met mansugatan
Ta sikamin dua'y sankatulungan*

*Say pakaamtak mabetbet nen saman
Kansionan yo ak ni
Angga'd ag ko pakaugip*

*Natan abangon so dalak a nandengel
Angga'd inkasumpal na kansion*

*Man alas-dos la'd palbangon
Nen dinmeen tayo
Salamat ed saray ebat yo
Ed saray tepet tan upapet ko*

*Nang ako'y mapagalitan
Hinila ko ang hagdanan
Dumiretso ako sa higaan
Sinabi ko ang nangyari*

*Ang sabi mo na sumagot
"wag ka ditong basta-basta
Kapag nadatnan ka ng aking ama
'di ko alam kung anong gagawin niya
sakin"*

*Sabihin mo sa ama mo
Na kaming dalawa'y maglaban
'di naman kami magsusugatan
Dahil kaming dalawa'y magbalae*

*Ang pagkakaalam ko madalas noon
Kakantahan niyo parin ako
Hanggang di ako makatulog*

*Ngayon buhay ang dugo kong nakinig
Hanggang sa pagtatapos ng kanta*

*Mag aalas-dos na ng madaling araw
Nang natahimik tayo
Salamat sa mga sagot niyo
Sa mga tanong at pangungulit ko*

*When I was scolded
I pulled the staircase
Went straight to bed
I told you what happened*

*You said in answer
"don't go here for no reason
If my father finds you here
I don't know what he'll do to me"*

*Tell your father this
That the two of us battle
We won't harm each other
Because were in-laws*

*I remember once that often
You still sing to me
Until I can't fall asleep*

*Now my blood is alive in listening
Until the ending of your song*

*It's almost two o'clock in the morning
When we went quiet
Thank you for your answers
To my questions and my being a nuisance*

Ag ko la amta no kapigan
So samput ya impantongtong tayo
Aya la anganko so sankarukeyan

Nabuas ompikal ak lamet
Sikayon natilak o taynan ko
Manalagar no kapiga'y isabik
A singa panalgar yo'd pansironget
Tan pansironget na bilay

'di ko na alam kung kalian
Ang huli nating pag-uusap
Ito na yata ang pinakamahaba

Bukas aalis ulit ako
Kayong maiiwan o iiwan ko
Maghihintay kung kalian ang pagbalik ko
Na tulad ng paghintay niyo sa dapit-hapon
At dapit-hapon ng buhay

I don't know when
Our last dialogue was
This is probably the longest one

Tomorrow I'll leave again
You who stays or you who I'll abandon
Will wait when I'll be back
Like the way you wait for the sunset
And the sunset of life

Sonata cantata
(para ed si Leonor)

Nankalkalnan tinmagey
So petang na laman ta pinabli
Akaarum ni angob na champagne
Ed engas mo

Nankalkalnan nanlakseb
Ira'y anino ta
Ya onsayaw ed dingding
Gaoa na maliket a dalang
Na kolor rosan kandila
Say dukulan ag la makaalagar
Say sonata et babansagan
Ngalngali la narengel
So pokal na puso
Saray dakulap ko
Akup ira'y amputin malapati
Ed malimgas mon pagew

Nankalkalnan nankasakey
So dua'ran pinalsa
Maganon alingoanan so sipanan
Lapu'd samit na aplos
Narumog labat so sakey tan sakey
So banoa ya nanlapuan
No iner nalikna so mistirio
Na kareenan tan natukor

Sonata cantata
(para kay Leonor)

Dahandahang tumaas
Ang init ng laman natin mahal
Nakadagdag pa ang amoy ng champagne
Sa hininga mo

Dahandahang naghubad
Ang mga anino natin
Na sumasayaw sa dingding
Dahil sa masayang apoy
Ng kulay rosang kandila
Ang higaan di na makaantay
Ang sonata ay sinasabayan
Muntik nang marinig
Ang tibok ng puso
Ang mga palad ko
hawak nila ng puting mga kalapati
Sa maaliwalas mong dibdib

Dahandahang nag-isa
Ang dalawang nilalang
Sandaling nalimutan ang kasunduan
Dahil sa tamis ng haplos
Mahanap lang ang isa't isa
Sa araw na pinagmulan
Kung saan madadama ang misteryo
Ng katahimikan at malaman

Sonata cantata
(for Leonor)

Slowly it rose
The heat of our bodies love
The smell of champagne added
To your breath

Slowly undressed
Our shadows
Dancing on the walls
Due to the extatic flame
Of the rose-colored candle
the bed couldn't wait
keeping pace with the sonata
we could almost hear
the beating of our hearts
my palms
are cupping the white doves
On your splendid breasts

Slowly becoming one
Two beings
Momentarily forgetting our promise
Because of the sweetness of touch
Just to feel each other
In the sun of origin
Where we could feel the mystery
Of silence and understand

So subol na maandom a panangaro

Nankalkalnan pinmelnak
So balatabat dia ed dorongaoan
No iner manantandag
Ira'y makakaibeg a biteoen
Ed aroan ta kalabian pinabli

Ang pinagmulan ng walang hanggang pag-
ibig mo

Dahandahang nalunod
Sa liwanag ng buwang-liwayway sa
bintana
Kung saan dumudungaw
Ang mga naiinggit na mga bituin
Sa pagmamahalan natin kagabi, mahal

The origin of your never-ending love

Slowly drowning
In the light of the dawn at the window
Where peering in
Are the stars who envy
Our lovemaking last night, my love

Dala na tumatagaumen

Insulat mo so ampait a bilay
Asugat tan apuulan so papil ed dalam
Pinaekatan mo'y lua so matam

Piraoat mo'y mareen iran agew
Nen akila kan akibakal
Ed kapalandeyan

Mannangis ira'y musia
Nen inateyan mo'y sanlasus a patey
Inuran na bala so malangoer a laman

Say sampul ya terter na dalam
Mansa ed dalin no iner nisulat
So sampul mo met ya anlong

Dugo ng kwentisa

Sinulat mo ang mapait na buhay
Nasugat at nasunog ang papel sa dugo mo
Pinalabas mo ang luha sa mata mo

Inaasam mo ang tahimik na mga araw
Nang sumama ka't nakipaglaban
Sa kabukiran

Tumangis ang mga musa
Nang namatay ka ng isandaang patay
Inulan ng bala ang bata among katawan

Ang huling tulo ng dugo mo
Mantsa sa lupa kung saan nasulat
Ang huli mo ring tula

Blood of the storyteller

You wrote the bitter life
Wounded and burned is the paper by your
blood
You poured the tears from your eyes

You wanted the quiet days
When you joined the battle
In the fields

The muses wept
When you died a hundred deaths
Your youthful body showered by bullets

The last drop of your blood
A stain in the ground where written
Is your last poem.

Panalagar
(sakey a sonito)

Pinabli iner so kaoalaan
Nen saray matak et malangoer ni
Tan say puso et ag ni abogbog
Na malurey iran panangaro?

Oala'd kaumaan na anganko
Tangay-tangay ed saray biteoen
Kekereoe'y isabi na sakey
A pinalsan insipan na kugip

No dia'd kanonotan mo et oala
So nayaran paoilen ya agew
Paoil ka inaro tan anap mo
Ag la kapigan narumog mo ak

Ed saray agew a panalagar
Ag mo ak labat la naimano

Paghihintay
(isang soneto)

Mahal s'an ang kinaroroonan
Nang ang mga mata ko'y bata pa
At ang puso'y hindi pa nabugbog
Ng mapagbirong mga pag-ibig?

Alam ko ay nasa kabukiran
Nakatingala sa mga bit'win
Hinihiling pagdating ng isang
Taong nagmula sa panaginip

Kung sa isipan mo ay mayroong
Maaaring balikan na araw
Balik ka mahal at hanapin mo
Baka sakaling mahanap mo 'ko

Sa mga araw ng paghihintay
Hindi mo na ako mapapansin

Waiting
(a sonnet)

Love where are you
When my eyes were still young
And my heart wasn't bruised yet
By ridiculing love?

What I know is in the fields
Looking at the stars
Wishing the arrival of one
Person spawned by dreams

If in your mind there is
A day you want to come back to
Come back love and find me
You might find me

In the days of waiting
You may never notice me

bato ed poso'y ponti

1.

mabetbet nen saman
mantongtong si bai Marin
kada labi
laut la no sikamin apo to
maingal tan ag ni makaugip

aminsan atongtong da
si laki Tiago aman
ya nanari ed Tolong
angga'd man ed Binalatongan
kabosol na matatakew
tan kapara ton digalingan

nen kaksilan to ni
na sayan laki Tiago
anabat tan akipustaan
ed managlako'y agamang
say kuan to
bayaran to so kantidar
na samplatyadon agamang
no ag to naupot ya kanen
bang balet no naupot
ag manbayar ni ultimo sintimo

bato sa puso ng saging

1.

madalas noon
magkukwento si lola Marin
kada gabi
lalo na 'pag kaming mga apo niya
maingay at 'di pa makatulog

minsan nakuwento nila
si lolo Tiago matagal nang patay
na naghari sa Tolong
hanggang doon sa Binalatongan
kinaiinisan ng mga magnanakaw
at katulad niyang may anting-anting

noong kalakasan pa niya
nitong si lolo Tiago
sumalubong at nakipagpustahan
sa nagbebenta ng alamang
sabi niya
babayaran niya ang halaga
ng isang bandehadong alamang
'pag 'di niya ito maubos na kainin
ngunit 'pag naubos
'di magbabayad kahit ultimong sentimo

stone in the heart of the banana tree

1.

Often
Lola Marin would tell us
Every night
Especially when us grandchildren
Were noisy and can't sleep yet

One time she told us
About lolo Tiago whose dead long ago
Who reigned in Tolong
Until there in Binalatongan
hated by robbers
and others like him with talismans

when he was still strong
this lolo Tiago
he confronted and betted with
that vendor of shrimp paste
he said
he will pay the price
of one platter of shrimp paste
if he can't finish eating it
but if he does
he won't pay a single cent

tan sinimot to kono
dia'd pigaran minuto
a singa labat angan na deremen
tinmaynan ya anggapo'y oala
say managlako akanganga

say sikrito to kuanen bai
sakey a baton nanlapu
ed poso'y ponti

2.

angabkabuasan
kaiba so kapinsan
sinorob a mantalikepkep
so kapontian
nananap na sengeg
ya oala'y poso

tangay-tangay
oala ni ed kanonotan
so tongtong nen bai
kalabian

ag niaraoi
say kapinsan a bii
pinmetek ed nalmon poso
tinmangay
linmikdem
(singa mipaparaoat)

at sinimot niya raw
sa ilang minuto
na para lang kumain ng pinipig
umalis na parang walang nangyari
'yung tintera nakanganga

ang sikreto niya sabi ni lola
isang batong nanggaling
sa puso ng saging

2.

maaga pa lang
kasama ang pinsan
sinuot naming nakayukod
ang taniman ng mga saging
naghanap ng puno
na mayroong puso

tumitingala-tingala
nasa isipan pa
ang kuwento ni lola
kagabi

'di kalayuan
ang pinsan kong babae
tumapat sa nahanap na puso
tumingala
pumikit
(parang humihiling)

And he finished it all
In just a few minutes
Like he's eating rice crispies
Then left like nothing happened
The vendor's jaw dropped

His secret said grandma
One stone that came from
The heart of the banana tree

2.

Early in the morning
With my cousin
We went and stooped
Through the banana trees
Looking for a tree
With a heart

Looking up
Still in mind
Lola's story
Last night

Not far off
My female cousin
Went in front of a heart
Looked up
Closed her eyes
(like she's wishing)

tan bengat lan inmeyag na
Darnaaaaaa!

dinmepak
amoniti'y sengeg
angioasioas na bislak
alopak so bolong na ponti
abagtug kalamor
so pigaran sibaoeng

at biglang sumigaw ng
Darnaaaaaa!

sumipa
nanuntok ng puno
nagwasiwas ng patpat
nabali ang dahon ng saging
nalaglag tuloy
ang ilang mga salagubang

And suddenly shouted
Darnaaaaaa!

She kicked
Punched a tree trunk
Brandished a stick
A leaf of the banana tree broke
Which why it fell
A handful of beetles

Urduja
(sakey a sonito)

Kaoalaan mo natan Urduja?
Anggapo'y makaamta no iner
So angisinopan da ed sika

Say linget tan dala'n impaterter
Tinmubo iran dika na dalin
Pian nasakuban so nanarian

Ag ko amta no aya so bilin
Na prinsesa na Caboloan

Nabilang so istoryan nisulat
Istoryan mangipakabat komun
No sika et tua o mito labat

Bonga'y kanonotan na totoon
Pinabliran maong so luyag da
Kanian say ngaran mo inako ra

Urduja
(isang soneto)

Nasaan ka sa ngayon Urduja?
Walang nakakaalam kung saan
Ang pinaglibingan sa'yo nila

Ang pawis at dugong idinaan
Tumubo sila sa lupang damo
Nang matakpan ang kaharian

'Di ko alam kung ito ang gusto
Ng prinsesa ng Caboloan

Ang istoryang naisulat, biláng
Istoryang magpapatunay sana
Kung ika'y totoo o mito lang

Bunga ng kaisipan nila na
Mahal ng lubos kung sa'n nagmula
Kaya ngalan mo'y tinanggap nila

Urduja
(a sonnet)

Where are you now Urduja?
Nobody knows where
They buried you

The sweat and blood that poured
They grew as grass on the earth
To cover your kingdom

I don't know if this is what you want
Princess of Caboloan

Stories about you were few
Stories that would've proven
If you were real or myth only

Because of their thoughts
That they love their birthplace
That's why they accepted your name

iliw

agay la'y samit a dengelen
so balikas na sibilao
no say samiong da'ra'y rosas
milmila'd siplog na dagem
no say linaew natipon
ed dakulap da'ra'y dika
tan dia'd kapan-usbong
iran tanaman

agay la'y samit a dengelen
so singaoey na sibilao
kaoalaan mo la balet inaro?
pialagar kan onsabi
pian napunas la komun
iya'y bakat na amatanir lan tiagew
ed saya'y nanermen kon mata
abayag lan makakailiw ed sika

sabik

walang kasing sarap na dinggin
ang tula ng tagsibol
kapag ang amoy ng mga rosas
ay sumasama sa simoy ng hangin
kapag ang hamog natipon
sa palad ng mga damo
at sa mga bagong-usbong
na mga halaman

walang kasing sarap na dinggin
ang alaala ng tagsibol
ngunit nasaan ka na mahal ko?
hinihintay kang dumating
upang mapawi na sana
itong bakas ng nagpapaalam na tag-araw
dito sa nalulungkot kong mga mata
matagal nang nasasabik sa iyo

anxious

Nothing feels greater than hearing
The verses of spring
When the aroma of the roses
Complement with the breeze
When the fog collects
In the palm of the grasses
And on the newly-sprouted
Plants

Nothing feels greater than hearing
The memory of spring
But where are you my love?
I'm waiting for you to come back
To relieve
This mark of the retreating summer
Here in my sorrowful eyes
That has long been anxious for you