

## ANG MGA PINAGDAANANG BUHAY NG IBONG ADARNA: NARRATIVITY AND IDEOLOGY IN THE ADARNA'S CORRIDO AND FILMIC VERSIONS

**Francisco Benitez**  
**Department of Comparative Literature**  
**University of Washington**  
***kikobenitez@gmail.com***

### Abstract

Through a consideration of narrativity, the paper explores different structures of recognition in the *corrido* and 1941 filmic versions of the *Ibong Adarna*. The paper compares the chapbook's context and narrative techniques with that of the film's capacity to address an audience and creating subject-forms. It explores the applicability of James Siegel's concept of the *lingua franca's* communicative power to the Philippine situation, and suggests that different textual technologies contain different though overlapping grammars that affect their ideological functions.

### Keywords

film adaptation, metrical romance, myth

### About the Author

Francisco Benitez is Assistant Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Washington. His research interests are on the multiple and often conflicting formations of modern subjectivity and nationalism in the literature and film of insular Southeast Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is currently working on a book project on the Philippine *awit* and the Malay *syair* during the emergence of print-capitalism in insular Southeast Asia.

In his series of essays on the mythological function and structure of romances, Northrop Frye argues that contemporary mass and popular culture kidnapped the romance of earlier periods, what he calls "the absorbing of it into the ideology of an ascendant class" (54), in order to regulate a certain kind of wish-fulfillment that brings into the present something that properly belongs to the future in the guise of the past or the archaic.<sup>1</sup> He argues that the rise of the adventure, love story, and quest romance as a genre of the popular novel indexes the emergence of the bourgeois class, and that the mythic function of romance is given over to the creation of a class ethos. The process of creating a class ethos in turn simultaneously contains within it what Raymond Williams terms the vestigial, the dominant and the emergent structures of feeling, or the lived experience that goes beyond articulations of a rational political ideology (see especially chapters 8 and 9). In this view, romances, love stories and adventure quests not only has an ideological or mythic function

for class structures, but in this very opening to temporal transitions, also contain the contradictory possibilities implicit in modernity's potentially liberating impulse as well as its conservative or regulatory force.

The Philippine metrical romance, known as *awit* and *corrido*,<sup>2</sup> was perhaps the most widely read vernacular secular literature in nineteenth century Philippines. They were printed and circulated, memorized and sung in many vernaculars.<sup>3</sup> Considered by some as literature primarily of the peasantry, lower classes or of children, they were judged "low" literature—though they probably crossed class and racial boundaries as the first secular mass printed literature of the country. Sharing the market with religious literature like *pasyons*, novenas and lives of saints (with which they share many characteristics and which were often categorized with them), they were sold outside churches after mass or even in bookshops well into the mid-twentieth century. I would argue that the Tagalog *corrido*'s emergence in the eighteenth century, and its dominance in the nineteenth century, is symptomatic of historical conditions not in the sense of being "un-modern," but in the sense of Fredric Jameson's argument that the romance's

ultimate condition of figuration, on which the other preconditions ... are dependent—the category of worldness, the ideologeme of good and evil felt as magical forces, a salvational historicity—is to be found in a transitional moment in which two distinct modes of production, or moments of socioeconomic development, coexist. Their antagonism is not yet articulated in terms of the struggle of social classes, so that its resolution can be projected in the form of a nostalgic (or less often, a Utopian) harmony. (148)

The metrical romance exists in a moment of historical transition that configure multiple temporalities and uneven developments across and within various geopolitical spaces.<sup>4</sup> The historical moment is not, Jameson argues, causal in a direct and instrumental manner, but constitutes a "limiting situation" or condition of possibility for production, reception and circulation for a form or genre. Jameson suggests that narratives contain sedimented traces of older narrative forms that continue to haunt newer and subsequent literary forms.

Few Philippine romance narratives are as famous and easily recognized as *Ibong Adarna*. Most Philippine *corridos* are translated or directly adapted from identifiable Spanish romances of chivalry. The *Adarna*, however, does not seem to have been translated from a European original, though its folkloric motifs (such as the magical bird whose

song cures the king or the winning the hand of bird-princesses) are common enough both in the Philippines and elsewhere. The *Adarna corrido's* 1034 quatrains tell the tale of Principe Juan's quest for the *Adarna* bird to cure his ailing father, his resistance to the bird's seductive songs and his betrayal by his brothers that has been made into comic books, school textbooks, and has been the source and inspiration for various films and songs. Clodualdo Del Mundo's *Native Resistance* argues that by making films that had references familiar to the local population, early Philippine film "resisted" the imperial capacity of American cinema. He argues that early Philippine film indigenized filmic technologies by adapting recognizable vernacular dramatic forms to the screen. Del Mundo implies that the use Filipinos made of cinematic technology increased the number of cinematic gazes structured by filmic production beyond just the American imperial one.<sup>5</sup> Foremost in his analysis are the adaptations of *sarsuelas* and *komedyas* by LVN studios. One of his case studies is the early version of *Ibong Adarna* (1941) that adapted the *moro-moro* or *komedya* for film (see chapter three). The film's own opening credits claims it is an adaptation of a Philippine legend.

As opposed to Del Mundo's arguments about the links between the *komedyas* and early film, this paper attempts to explore the structures of recognition in the *Adarna corrido* and film as narrative texts. I do not mean to suggest that the film was adapted from a *corrido* rather than a *komedya*. Nor do I argue against the communal aspects of vernacular performance, nor provide a different history of filmic adaptation. This paper hopes to explore provisionally some of the structures of recognition and exchange implicit in the narrative techniques available to the chapbook and film as forms in themselves. I would like to suggest that the texts allow us to explore the ways in which subject positions are constituted in a social field through structures of recognition particular to secondary orality<sup>6</sup> and film. Further, my analysis is limited by looking at the textual traces of orality in the chapbook version through its style and narrative technique, rather than their *actual* performances that might elucidate non-verbal performative functions.<sup>7</sup> The chapbooks mimic the bard's performance and foregrounds a transactional relationship between the reader/listener and the author and authorities.

The Tagalog *corrido* contain a particular poetics of *translatio studii* that presupposes the colonial relationship to Spanish, the Church and the mediating role *ladinos* played in the production of lowland Christian culture in the Philippines. The conventional modes of configuring authorship in the romance borrow authority from colonial power. The *corridos* are generally anonymous, with the convention of imploring the Divine, usually the Virgin, for the grace to narrate the story. The authority of the text is not based upon the author, but

on other textual sources, usually taken to be *historia*. It is also convention for the narrator to beg forgiveness of his or her inability to equal the source, and to end the *corrido* or *awit* with humility, to ask the reader to complete the story or amend it if somehow found lacking. Authority in the *corrido* derives in part on the conceit found in the openings of most romances, that the romance was adapted or translated from another source rather than the creative genius of the writer, and with the convention at the end asking the reader/listener to complete or amend the romance should it be found lacking. The *Adarna* for example, asks for the listening audience's (*auditorio*) attention at the beginning, right after invoking the help of the Divine. Authority in the *corrido* derives its legitimacy from a vacillation between an external source (either the Divine or the lettered knowledge of European texts), and the listening community constituted through the very performance of the *corrido* and that can judge the truthfulness of the narration.

The *corrido* were performed orally in social gatherings, sung or chanted by a bard, or perhaps read individually or out loud to a group in chapbook form. As chapbooks that flowered with print-capitalism in nineteenth century Philippines, the *corrido* occupy a peculiar space between mass, popular, and folk literature. The chapbooks were written in the vernacular that constituted the language of the *indios'* public sphere, derived for the most part from non-indio sources, generally printed without colophons under an atmosphere of censorship,<sup>8</sup> and arguably are extensions of a Spanish religious colonial ideological apparatus and took part in an emergent public sphere. The Tagalog film in turn, though clearly and unabashedly popular and mass mediated has had a history of being associated with a certain conception of the masses as the people.<sup>9</sup> Rafael Ma. Guerrero for example has argued that Tagalog film's social function has more to do with the unconscious desires and aspirations of the "people" than with the aesthetics of cinematic art: they "reveal deep-rooted, tacit and even covert aspirations, frustrations, and complexes of more pertinence to the national character than to the established genres of cinema" (109). Part of the way these texts ideologically function as both mass media and folklore then is the manner by which they provide a position or place in a network of exchange of recognition of common concerns, aspirations, and cultural values. Both the chapbook and the film offer textual means to performatively situate the reader or audience within larger social networks. These textual means may be discerned in the diegetic content and themes of the *corrido* and film, as well as in the narrative logic of their styles. Along these axes—thematic, stylistic and historical—I sketch and explore some of the possible ways we can understand the specific structures of recognition that they engender.

Recognition is configured by the text offering a structure or form that both provides

places for, and performatively positions, listeners and speakers, spectacle and audience in a network of exchange. The narratives give subject-forms or sets of networked positions that can be occupied, taken up, reconfigured, as well as used to weave social relations, and thereby compose subjectivity and intersubjectivity (see Vince Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism* for a discussion of networks of exchange in Tagalog lowland societies). Subject-forms are reference points that provide anchors for social interaction, and that depend upon both preexisting discursive structures and practices of exchanges of recognition.<sup>10</sup> Recognition is the manner in which subjectivities interact and struggle with each other, and are necessary conditions for reflexive and self-reflexive individual and communal consciousness that require narratives or stories for their formulation and dissemination. Narrative texts provide a form through which subjectivity can be modeled, performed, articulated, actualized and propagated.

My interest in the *Adarna* here is not in consciousness but in exploring the manner by which narratives reify and constitute, while at the same time proving itself—and the community it engenders—to be negotiated and potentially under erasure, open-ended and changing. I suggest that narrativity, or the *temporality* of narrative and narration, gives us a glimpse of how communal formation binds us into a social order even as our interactions with such an order are precipitates of our agency. Folklorists have argued that the performative frame, both verbal and non-verbal, is key to understanding the affective appeal and function of folk narratives and rituals, even of rituals that are against the interest of some of the participants.<sup>11</sup> Form in this sense gives a shape to relations. The certainty given by a set and recognizable form, even when employed towards the emergence of something new, reiterates and renews older materials and relations. In suggesting this, I hope to foreground the ideological capacity of narrative iteration paradoxically to be both inherently conservative and potentially radical.

The *corrido* romances circulated in the Philippines like distant echoes of a bygone European period, but this is also symptomatic of Philippine conditions. Though *corrido* texts circulated well into the second half of the twentieth century and were most probably composed as early as the second half of the eighteenth century, the first printed version is believed to have been around 1815 (Fansler 204). I suggest it is in the transformations in the mode of production of the long *duree* of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the context of the *corrido's* limit situation for figuration might be found. I suggest we read the significance of the *corrido's* sedimentation of the oral in the written as a culture's incomplete move from what Samir Amin might call a primarily tributary to a more intensely capitalist form. This residual "orality" in the text, at one time the dominant

literary mode, creates a textual tension with the written and filmic narrative's impulse to create an ending that somehow legitimizes the status quo.

The *corrido* provide a form for organizing the structure of feeling of a specific historical moment, understood through Jameson to "block off or shut down a certain number of formal possibilities available before, and to open up determinate new ones, which may or may not ever be realized in artistic practice" (148). What then does the shift from metrical romances to other forms such as the novel, short story or even film that occurs in the early twentieth century indicate about the changes in formal "possibilities"? What difference does the medium make in the ideological function of the tale and the structures of recognition deployed? What are the ways in which technology and its attendant practices might provide a grammar for subject formation specific to secondarily or semi-oral *corrido* and to industrial commercial cinema produced by a studio system? How do these shifts point towards the various means by which desires that might expose what Herbert Marcuse called the "affirmative powers of culture" get coopted and sutured into dominant social relations? Borrowing from James Siegel's discussion of the *lingua franca* in Indonesia and Eva-Lotta Hedman's speculation about the Tagalog film as a possible cinematic *lingua franca* for the Filipino *masa* (for other discussions of the *lingua franca* in the Philippine context, see also Rafael's "Talglish"), I suggest below that the technological distinctions between the printed *corrido* chapbook and the cinema suggest differing possibilities for structures of recognition. While the secondarily oral *corrido* was either read in isolation or in social occasions mediated by a singer of tales, the film's camera takes the structuring or suturing dynamic of the bardic narrator that is mimed by the chapbook reading, and evokes the desire for recognition without the capacity of a singer to frame and mediate the interaction in a social and communal event. I would like to suggest that the opaque filmic image, in contrast to the mimed bard's narration, does not fully return the spectator's desire for recognition, even as it activates and commodifies this desire. Though there is a type of ritualized sociality in the watching of a film that releases what Siegel calls its "communicative power" or perhaps the "mythic" function of the *lingua franca* to constitute a community through narration, the filmic activation of desire for recognition and subject formation in turn offers its own possibilities and foreclosures.

**The Catachretic *Principalía*:** "Maginoo sa DON Lamang" and the *Corrido* as *literatura callejera de corro y plebe*



**Kasabihán:**

Máginoó man kung turan  
 At walang magandang ásal  
 Kapárang tae nang bákál  
 Maginoó sa DON lamang

**Saying:**

Even if noble when named  
 But has not good manners  
 Like the 'shit of steel'  
 Noble in DON only.

The octosyllabic mono-rhyming quatrain above is taken from Pedro Serrano Laktaw's entry for *ginoo*.<sup>12</sup> *Maginoo* is a modifier as well as a noun, a title as well as a position in society. The saying plays with this distinction (note the shift in accents: *máginoó* as opposed to *maginoó* that emphasizes the *ma-* prefix). Someone called *maginoo*, if he does not act like one, then such a person is like an *escoria*—the dregs of society or the slag of metallurgy—*maginoo* or noble, only “DON.” The joke is that *don* here is both the mere title as well as a place marker for “there” or *doon*, which directs us back to *turan*, name or mention. *Maginoo* is nothing than simply an indexical signifier whose relationship to a proper referent, “magandang asal” or proper behavior and manners, can be subject to a catachresis. Such a play on words also affects the other register of Don as the title of the *maginoo*. Scoria, or the waste of metallurgy, is contrasted with the true noble, or *maginoo*, but is linked to the “false” noble, the noble who does not have “magandang asal” or proper behavior or manners. The title of “don” for a *maginoo* is a signifier whose links to a proper signified needs to be proven.

As a title, “don” reflects a certain social standing in *indio* society. It is for this reason that Florentino Hornedo calls the *awit* and *corrido*, whose characters are primarily dons and doñas, “literature of legitimation.”<sup>13</sup> For Hornedo, they attempt to legitimize the use of power rather than criticize it (a function he wishes to give to “true” carnivalesque folklore).<sup>14</sup> What Hornedo suggests is that the *awit* and the *corrido*, as metrical romances that portray the concerns primarily of a ruling class (displaced as it might be to Europe), do not present the “persona” of the folk but of the vestiges (under colonial conditions) of the precolonial elites, the people that became the *principalía*. Hornedo reminds us that the world of the metrical romance is not strictly speaking “folk,” but rather the world of elites, of the pre-colonial and colonial ruling class, that extols and legitimizes royal power. Yet, as Hornedo himself avers, the capacity to become a “don” based on “magandang asal” does emphasize an ethical component that can be seen to keep abuse of “royal” power in check (78).

In contrast to Hornedo, Damiana Eugenio points out that at “the height of the popularity of *awits* and *corridos* in the Philippines in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there seemed to have been a free exchange of story material between the *awits* and *corridos* and folktales” (“Philippine Folktales” 167). The world of the *corrido*, of questing European knights-errant became so popular and disseminated among the *indios* such that in the 1910s, Dean Fansler called them indicative of the “mental pabulum of the ordinary native” (203). The *corridos* portray the ways in which the *indios* conceived of the workings of power, leadership and authority. One could almost say that the Philippine metrical romance was an “Occidentalized” vision of the European world from which not only the majority of original plots were derived, but more importantly a form in which colonial or imperial power manifested, appeared or presented itself to the natives. Yet power, particularly hegemonic power is no simple coercion from above. The *awit* or *corrido* have been seen as either markers of hispanization of the Philippines or of an enduring folk tradition upon which the nationalist movement cast its shadow. They have been read as didactic stories that portray the genteel and conservative orientation of “traditional” Philippine culture and society amidst the changes caused by Americanization, as well as the source of visions of moral virtue that inspired radical movements that sought social transformation and justice (see Iletto). One of the things this juxtaposition of Eugenio and Hornedo suggests is the difficulty in assuming folkways or even populism necessarily leads to radicalism or is always progressive. The other is how the *corridos* might provide a formal resolution to real social contradictions that contain what Raymond Williams calls the vestigial and the emergent, or exhibit the utopic impulses and drives that Jameson discusses as the political unconscious of narratives as socially symbolic acts.

How do texts that translate the world of Spanish aristocracy gain such appeal and importance to the *indios* of *Las Islas Filipinas*? (see Leonard). How did they function in this milieu? In discussions of the world of the *moro-moro* or *komedya*, scholars like Doreen Fernandez, Nicanor Tiongson, and Resil Mojares argue that on the one hand they were clearly textual means for Christianization and conversion, in other words ideological technologies of colonial rule, but at the same time the staging of these dramas during fiestas constituted an almost ritualized performative text of community relations, with all the complexities such a social text implies. As such, they are simultaneously conservative in maintaining the status quo of the social structures of imperial rule, as well as proto-public spheres where intersubjective relations are negotiated and actualized.<sup>15</sup> The themes of morality, virtue and order within these exemplary texts provide terms to evaluate good and bad colonial governance. As exempla of propriety, these texts also provided the



*indios* with images that came to constitute part of their own technologies of the self (see Fernandez). I suggest that it is partly against this vision of Europe as a source of status, propriety and power that a form of colonial mimicry of hispanicity (or semi-hispanization, as Phelan has argued) came to be circulated among the *indios* and the social field was mapped among them.

Access to this power and authority required the translational skills of a literate elite or the intervention of a class of municipal elites of the resettled pueblos called the *principalía*. They derived their authority from the colonial regime and mediated between the Spanish government and clergy on the one hand, and the *indios* on the other. They aspired to the “dons’ and “doñas” of the *corrido*, and whose archaic and foreign ethos was adapted to and clothed their own world. In their translational mediation between the people and the sources of colonial authority, they accessed what Vince Rafael calls the “promise of the foreign” — *translatio* Philippine style (see also Raphael’s *Contracting*).<sup>16</sup> While the romances display the erudition of a literate bilingual class to a presumably less literate audience, they exhibit a *translatio studii* without the abrogation of authority of a *translatio imperii*. Instead, the romances generally cobble together authority that seemingly derives from “elsewhere” (either the Virgin or the audience) and attempt to proximate this power.<sup>17</sup> They articulate themselves then to power structures and relations of colonial society. The colonial regime’s social field, its concerns and anxieties are in this manner imprinted in the romances.

These texts and their performance may be read as manifesting techniques of power and containing technologies of the self, both of the rulers and the ruled. They positioned subjects in a specific network that articulated social relations. Despite the fact that the romances’ settings are invariably anachronistic visions of Europe which are disseminated as representations of the contemporary state of affairs, they gain their impact within the colony in positing the source of power and authority in the colonial period as distant (if not downright transcendent), vertically integrated and religiously motivated, and thereby requiring intermediaries. The intermediary position was occupied by bilingual *ladinos*<sup>18</sup> and *principalía*, at least until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Philippine metrical romance emerging out of the resettled pueblos thus has a relationship similar to what Angel Rama calls the “lettered city” of Latin America, where “all aspired to be *hidalgos*—minor nobility with the title *don* attached to their names—disdaining manual labor and lording it over their slaves and over the indigenous inhabitants who had been entrusted to them by the crown” (11). In the case of the Philippine *principalía*, they were themselves *indios* (by the late eighteenth century, increasingly Chinese mestizos) lording it over other *indios*. They were the proponents of the *maginoo* ethos. Throughout the late

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the period of the *awit* and *corrido*'s flowering, the position of this class as an administrative category was slowly being eroded as the Spanish regime had to govern the colony directly after the loss of Mexico, and began to increase the secular or civilian state's more direct and intensive regulation of the population.<sup>19</sup>

As late as the second half of the nineteenth century, according to the Comisión Central and Exposición General de Las Islas Filipinas, authors of the *Memoria Complementaria de la Sección 2*, 1887, the *indios* had no access to any other representations or knowledge of Europe, except through these texts. Thus the *indios*, according to them, have no sense of the history and of the progress of modernity in Europe. The *memoria* argues that the *indios* particularly those who lived along the edges of colonial control and the forests, were unexposed to modern history, did not understand transformations in political sovereignty and maintained an anachronistic notion of kingship and politics. The *memoria* argues that the *indios* in general have no sense of modern politics or of political parties, of citizenship and political representation, and by implication have no concept of liberal sovereignty—it goes without saying that these authors in 1887 argue that the *indios* should not be given that which they do not understand (338). A similar deferral of recognition happens under the United States after 1898, though this time with Spain and Hispanicity itself a problematic figure from which Filipinos of the Philippines (as opposed to *Las Islas Filipinas*) were to be rescued. Once again, an imperial power argues against recognizing Filipino sovereignty and refuses to grant citizenship to the conquered while presupposing that a modern liberal subjectivity that conjoined sovereignty with citizenship was the only proper one. Once again, the cultural field is not detached from these concerns.

The opinion that the *awit* and *corrido* comprise low or bad literature generally has Western notions of high literature as their comparative criterion. As an extension of this, many critics argued that literature's capacity to mark cultural elevation and education's function to create citizen-subjects required more "realist" fare. The famous contest between the *komediantes* and the *sarsuelistas* at the turn of the twentieth century that Del Mundo also mentions (69-72), attests to this divide even among vernacular writers. The *awit* and *corrido* do eschew verisimilitude, and as Trinidad Pardo de Tavera famously notes as late as the 1920s:

The *corridos* are stories in verse about historic events, falsified and fanciful, and love-tragedies full of wonderful events mixed with divine prodigy and diabolical magic—all lengthy, exaggerated, puerile, and absurd in the extreme. No one of the characters is native. All are Turks, Arabs, knights-errant, ambassadors, dukes,

warriors in armor, provided with magic arms ... good Castilians, and bad strangers.  
(7)

Pardo de Tavera argues that the literature of the *indios*, inherited from Spanish times but still circulated in the early twentieth century under the American regime with the blessings of the Catholic Church, did not have the pedagogical function of creating a “logical mentality” among the people. Instead their pedagogical function was to teach servitude and supplication, and the need for intercessors before a higher power. Such literature, Pardo de Tavera argued, was inimical to the formation of civic virtue in a democratic society that the public education system under American colonial rule ostensibly strove to create and upon which the deferred independence was conditioned.<sup>20</sup> The world of *Adarna* in the LVN film though, as I argue below, skews the older modes of intersubjectivity as supplication.

There are at least two registers to the technologies of the self in the *corrido*. On the one hand, there is the technology of the self as exemplarity: the *corrido* provides commonly recognizable subject-forms of virtuous ideal characters. These virtuous ideals gain cultural and symbolic capital through specific structures of recognizing normativity that are quite conservative. The cultural capital, the power of technologies of the self, depend in part on the social field within which they are deployed and with which they have a reciprocal relationship. Thus, on the other hand, exemplarity requires a certain field and a level of recognition where its opposite can be clearly discerned. The contrasts and reversals, the *peripeteia* and *agnorisis*, in the story create a field of practice and interaction where exemplarity itself emerges. It is not simply that the characters themselves exhibit virtue, but that they do so in their actions and encounters with other characters. The narrative’s arrangement, or emplotment, itself places value on these exemplary actions and characters. The dichotomy of good and evil of the melodramatic *corrido* may thus be read as registering the anxieties over threats to the colonial order. Thus a consequence of Pardo de Tavera’s “good Castilians and bad strangers” may be taken to mean that the *corridos* figured exemplarity along the colonial lines, that the recognizable structures of what Ileta called the *plaza-cabecera* complex provided the world of the *corrido* an anchor point for order, civilization and salvation. Outside this colonial order lay the wilderness, the land of the *tulisan*, the world of the bandits and the *remontados*, or even the land of the Muslims: the world of the “bad strangers” or those who lived away from subjugation beneath the church bells.<sup>21</sup> Paradoxically, these are also the spaces where true and proper leadership is tested and forged. These sites are the location where the foreign, the magical and the supernatural

thrive, the potentially beneficial or harmful forces that need to be tamed, redirected, and used for social and sexual reproduction. One such ambivalent and ambiguous creature is the *Adarna* bird.

Perhaps first published in or around 1860, though probably composed earlier, the *corrido* was definitely published by 1887. Vicente Barrantes' list of *corrido* and *awit* exhibited in the 1887 exposition had Spanish translations of the Tagalog metrical romances, including the *Adarna*.<sup>22</sup> Though the *corrido* is generally known as *Ibong Adarna* or the *Adarna Bird*, it is actually not about the *Adarna* bird itself. The title of the chapbook is *Corrido ng Pinagdaanang Buhay nang Tatlong Principeng, Magcacapatid na Anac nang haring Fernando at nang Reina Valeriana sa Caharian ng Berbania* [*Corrido of the Traveled/Travailed Life of Three Princes, Sibling Children of King Fernando and Queen Valeriana of the Kingdom of Berbania*]. The Barrantes' list translates the typical *pinagdaanang buhay* of the *corrido* titles back to the Spanish as *Vida Tragica* or *Historia y Vida Tristísima*, or *Sucesos de Pasaron* or *Vida de Llevaron*. The multiple ways in which they have been translated signals an issue of translation.

*Pinagdaanan* contains within it a notion of passing through, or on a road carrying a burden, to go through an experience. "*Pinagdaanan*": that which is trod upon, passed over or through, and by extension, the journey or road experienced—the way. Written in what could be considered a passive voice, it emphasizes, or foregrounds, the contextual or "situatedness," the difficult path and circumstances, of a life or life in general, *buhay*. A "life" here is seen as a series of events or experiences that are knitted together to create an plotment. The title does not necessarily emphasize the subjectivity of the three princes as "individuals" or monads, but the string of events, choices, actions and encounters that make up their lives, as well as their relationships within a social field, a social map with a specific genealogy and a locality—as siblings and as children of royalty in Berbania (*Tatlong Principeng Magcacapatid*).

The romance is made up of events, and episodes, each event a "travail" or a task that the hero(es) must pass. It is a quest—first, for a magical bird that shall cure the sick King Fernando; and then for the perfect brides for the three princes: Pedro, Diego and the heroic Juan. The primary issue is the tension and conflicts between the three princes—how they relate to each other, whom they shall marry and who shall inherit the throne(s). Like most Philippine metrical romances then, the *Adarna* is a family drama.<sup>23</sup> It highlights social and sexual reproduction, and the necessary resolution of intra-generational conflicts for the orderly passage of power from one generation to the next. Its episodes, or situations, are tied together through narrative techniques that, on the one hand sutures the narrative;

and, on the other, foregrounds the performative frame of the bard's enunciation or narration. Many of these techniques and conventions are inherited from European sources, but translated into the vernacular to create a particular mode of presentation. Written in monorhyming quatrains of eight (*corrido*) or twelve (*awit*) syllabic lines, the prosody restrictions make repetitions of specific conventional phrases common and even provides a lexicon for descriptions in the romance (see Fernandez for a discussion on this lexicon in the *komedya*).

### CHAPBOOK THEMES, ROMANCE CONJOINTURE, AND NARRATIVE SHIFTERS

The stories of the *corrido* often follow conventional narrative trajectories that lead to a happy resolution. They contain flat characters and scenes that are stitched together not necessarily to provide information about a logical or causally arranged plot, but to heighten emotional responses to events and confrontations in a family melodrama that lead to the moral of the story. There is little in the manner of an exploration of the inner world's landscape and experience of characters that we might find in a realist or psychological novel. Character development through exploration of an inner experience then does not seem to be the preoccupation of the *corrido* (except perhaps in a sort of allegorical mode in some *corridos*). Neither, it seems, is plot used in the sense of the causal logic of the unfolding events. Instead, the *corrido* seems to foreground the virtue of the characters and their exemplary or un-exemplary behavior within particular circumstances and in a specific social field.

Repetitions of tropes, of themes, and of couplets, if not whole stanzas, are not only indications of the secondarily oral nature of the *corrido*, they also stitch the underlying structures of echo and the dynamics of interlacing and variation in the romance's design or *conjointure*. As Kelly explains, "for Chrétien as well as the other romancers, it was the 'right' combination and adroit 'jointing' that brought out the significance of heterogeneous *matieres*" (31). Similar to European romances, the sense of exemplarity in the Tagalog *corrido* emerges out of the arrangement or configuration of the episodes, the themes and the actions or choices of the characters. The manner in which romance stitches together diverse thematic sources and concerns, gives form to a fundamental rather than a literal truth, itself a major theme of the *corrido*. In the final closing sections of the *Adarna*, the bardic narrator seems to declare a curious pedagogical thrust of the *corrido*: humility and "laxity" (*malubay*) of vassals: see stanzas 1031 and 1033. This is, of course, a little odd given

the treatment of *negritos* and various familiars throughout the story. Yet, what is the nature of this humility and laxity, and how does it emerge from the configuration of the *corrido*'s episodes that suggests primarily the tension between truth and appearance? The scenes or episodes are sequenced to evoke emotions, referencing common tropes in social relations and structuring them in mythopoetic or else almost archetypal ways.

The *corrido* deploys folkloric themes (such as the bird maidens) and “conjoins” them to Christian imagery. The very opening of the *corrido*, following convention, supplicates the Virgin Mary. Prince Juan’s journey is described as a *penitencia*<sup>24</sup> and he is aided at various points by Christ-like figures. The first hermit Prince Juan meets in his search for the Kingdom de los Cristales gives Juan bread (that *looks* moldy but *tastes* fresh), echoing but reversing the first encounter before Mount Tabor, as well as alluding to the Eucharist and to the sensorial theme of appearance or accidents as opposed to essence or substance. The episodes in the *corrido* are primarily stitched together sequentially,<sup>25</sup> but with slight or incremental variations, or else reversals. For example, the brothers must climb up Mount Tabor and are seduced by the sight of the bejeweled Piedras Platas, the tree where the *Adarna* roosts; but Juan must not be fooled by the beauty of the tree, instead he must look down to the hermit’s hut for hospitality and aid. The first (and most evil) brother does not even get to see the *Adarna*. He sleeps at the foot of the magical tree because of exhaustion. The second brother is seduced by the *Adarna*’s song and gets turned to stone along with his sleeping brother. Juan famously resists the spell and succeeds in capturing the bird. As each brother takes a step closer to the bird, the *corrido* creates an effect of incremental intensification as the readers approach a goal that is not quite suspense, in the sense of a plot question’s solution. Instead, these variations create a layering that distinguishes each character’s position in relation to the other, and to their distance from exemplarity and sanctity.

The opposition of sleep and awareness, of appearance and truth, is perhaps the most famous of *Adarna*’s motifs. The *pharmakon* of the story, the bird, is both truth-teller and enchanted with the capacity for death, or at least petrification. The hermit, with whom he had shared his last bread, informs Don Juan that the *Adarna* can only be captured by one who stays awake. His brothers, having already succumbed to fatigue and the seduction of the *Adarna*’s voice, have been turned to stone. Juan must cut himself and squeeze lime into his wounds if he is to be sufficiently awake to avoid the bird’s droppings which can turn him to stone like his brothers. This scene can be understood as containing a very Christian allegory about the mortification of the flesh, or as a certain folk asceticism that might lead to power and charisma; but it can also be interpreted as an anti-colonial allegory. In such



an anti-colonial reading, the *corrido* insists on staying true to one's objective and desires to alleviate the suffering and sickness of the bodily and earthy, of brute Calibanesque material reality, rather than the seduction of colonial or imperial glamour. It conjoins the realms of necessity and freedom beyond 'mere' appearances. Glamour in the *Adarna* divides brotherly love over objects of desire (fame, sexual love objects and the throne), and separates those who ought to have *kapatiran*, a kind of fraternity or even sodality.<sup>26</sup>

In this view, the beautiful bird is the illusory promise of the colonial order and an aesthetic that anaesthetizes us to structures of oppression and separation, of alienation and anomie—a brilliance that may only be mind-numbing and sleep inducing, a *Schein*. The light of freedom and truth is given then only to those who suffer pain, to those on whose bodies is cut and on whose wounds, moreover, drops of lime keeps awake the mark of awareness of the world around them. To them, the seduction of appearance, of the colors of the tree and the bird's feathers, the seduction of the bird's song, cannot lull them to sleep. Only to those who remain awake and vigilant, in other words, will the bird be given, and can turn the bird of slumber into the bird of healing truth-song. Here the body's pain protects from the numbing illusions of the eye and the ear and keeps Juan alert and focused. Only to them and in their presence will the bird be beautiful, sing and speak the *liwanag* of truth. Only those who are not distracted by appearance are not turned to stone<sup>27</sup> and can turn the bird of slumber into the bird of healing truth-song. Here the body's pain protects from the numbing illusions of the eye and the ear and keeps Juan alert and focused.

However, having succeeded in capturing the bird, the two older brothers betray Don Juan, steal the bird and leave him for dead. Arriving at the castle, the brothers are surprised that the bird refuses to sing since the one who truly caught it is absent. Its beautiful feathers are shed, leaving a bird with warts. Juan prays to the Virgin and is rescued by an old man. He returns to the palace and is not recognized by his father until the bird finally sings. The song of the bird that cures the king is none other than a truthful narration of Don Juan's own adventures to capture it and his fraternal betrayal (sung in seven narrative units and accompanied by seven changes in feathers).

The King's sickness was caused by a dream of Don Juan, his most favored child (10-1), being betrayed by two evil men and left for dead in a well (22-3). The dream is a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, as Juan's betrayal by his brothers happened twice. First, it occurred when they set off on the quest to cure the king and the brothers stole the bird from Juan; and second, because Pedro wishes to steal the Princessa Leonora for himself (373-89). It is this second betrayal (389) that the narrator tells us was the King's dream and

that set the whole quest into motion. In the plotline of Don Juan, Doña Leonora and Doña Maria's love triangle that occupies most of the *corrido*, it is the *Adarna* bird that wakes Juan up and informs him about the princesses in Reino de los Cristales and introduces the motif of infidelity in love (422-32). The bird's song narrating Doña Maria's beauty and seducing Juan actually makes him forget his feelings for Princessa Leonora (432), who in turn is postponing her wedding to Pedro and is waiting hopefully for Juan's return to Berbania.

Comprising more than half of the *corrido*, starting from stanza 423 when the *Adarna* returns to awaken Don Juan from his rest after being cured of Mount Armenia's magical wolf and baptized by Doña Leonora, Don Juan sets out to search for Doña Maria, dove princess of the Kingdom de los Cristales. The *Adarna* bird tells him of the princess and makes him forget Doña Leonora to whom he had previously declared his love. As part of the story's complication, he also initially declared his love to Doña Juana, Doña Leonora's sister. In order to marry Doña Maria, suitors must pass King Salermo's tests. Those who have failed, echoing the earlier episode, have been turned to stone. With Doña Maria's help, Don Juan passes all of King Salermo's tests. Two of the tests involve familiars: members of the family, the household, or magical familiars. Some of the familiars in the story are animals. Others are *negritos* and even an industrious *inchic* who harvested the wheat and baked the overnight bread that was one of Salermo's tests (stanza 615). When Salermo decided to send Juan to Inglaterra bearing the letter of his own execution orders, Doña Maria decided to elope with him. Salermo cursed his daughter in the name of God (843) so that Juan would forget her and marry another.

When they returned to Berbania, Juan left Maria in order to prepare a proper welcome for her. Significantly, this is described as *sa labas nang villa* (848) or *sa villa't, labas nang bayan* (855). Juan did indeed forget Maria and decided to marry Leonora who had been waiting for him all this time. Doña Maria came to the wedding in the guise of an empress and impressed the whole court. The wedding was stopped on account of her spectacular arrival and she offered to show a *laró* for the couple (892). Using her magic ring, Maria called for a flask within which was a *negrito* and a *negrita*. They danced, then narrated the story of Juan and Maria. Each time the *negrita* asked the *negrito* if he remembered Doña Maria and the *negrito* denied it, she whipped him. It is however Juan who *feels* the whip's sting.

This displacement of the source of Juan's pain onto a *negrito*, a "familiar" (whose meaning ranges between being a family member, or a household servant to a magical familiar), provides a layering of the structures of recognition and exemplarity. There is a clear hierarchy that paradigmatically links Maria to her familiars and her familiars to Juan.

The miniature familiars within the flask narrate events that happened to the royals who watch them. It creates a hierarchical structure with royals above and with familiars below. The sphere of the familiar (and their magical productive capacities, from the industrious *inchic* to the “upland” *negritos*) then is the base level upon which the *corrido*'s return to proper sexual and social reproduction depends. Even the supernatural is made “familiar” in the senses above by figuring it as having, and leading to, a royal hierarchy with a racialized organization. In this sense, the hermits, and the animals, like the unicorn, the eagle and the *Adarna* bird itself, are “familiar” helpers of the narrative arc that culminates in heterosexual social reproduction within the colonial order of things. After Juan finally recognized Maria, the problem of Leonora needs to be resolved. The bishop and the king first decided that Doña Leonora had the prior claim on Don Juan and that he must marry her, despite Juan’s recollection of Maria and his professed preference for her. Only Maria’s superior magical powers and her threat to flood Berbania, made the king change his mind and made Doña Leonora amenable to marrying the redeemed Don Pedro.

Reading the incorporation of these women and their familiars as a signal of an anxiety over their domestication, I would like to suggest, is to read the *corrido* somewhat against its narrative grain for traces of its political unconscious, and to read in the contours of its form—a *conjointure* that combines Christian, colonial and indigenous material—provisions for a recognizable place in a social mapping that partly accounts for the *corrido*'s regulatory power and appeal.

On the one hand, the magical women from outside the colonial order, *sa labas ng bayan o villa*, from under the earth and from the sky, compete in the *corrido* for the love and hand in marriage of the exemplary *maginoo*. They are in this way incorporated into the colonial order. On the other hand, the injunction at the end to emulate Juan and Maria, the rulers who are “lax with their vassals” (*mag utos pa ay malubay /sa mañga vasallong tanan stanza 1031*) and who are humble (*ang loob na cababaan /capatid nang capalaran 1033*) makes sense if we consider that Doña Maria’s magic is beyond the bishop and the king’s decision-making powers. Her white magic is shown to be superior to her father’s, the colonial state and the church. Only her love for Juan ties her, the supernatural figure prophesied by the truth-telling *Adarna* and re-enacted by truth dancing *Negritos*, to social reproduction and safe guards the continuity of royal power. Humility before power is advised. This power in turn desires proper recognition. It is her desire for Juan and his recognition that ends the *corrido*. Her gaining this recognition makes the couple an example of gentle rulers. At the same time, the desire for *kapatiran*, for fraternity, is met by Juan’s forgiveness of his brothers, Leonora’s agreement to marry Pedro and by the dividing of the thrones. Pedro

becomes king of Berbania and Juan king of the kingdom in the sky.

Deceptive appearances and forgetting, truth-telling, destiny and dreaming, the colonial and the supernatural, the royal and the familiar, recognition and reversals, are connected through narrative unfolding. The conjoining of the episodes and the narrative occurs in fact through a conceit that mimics the bardic performance in the chapbook texts. The *corrido* do not contain quotation marks that specify speech versus description. A reader must follow clues in the text to discover whether the stanza or line is spoken by a character, or is addressed directly to the audience by the narrator. Occasionally only contextual clues are given to designate when a speech by a character ends and when the narrator resumes in a non-mimetic manner.<sup>28</sup> What is clear and almost always marked are the shifts in scenes or focal point of the narrative episode. *Corridos* stitch narrative episodes together by shifting scenes, as if evoking or invoking them to the listener/reader's mind in the present, what supposedly had happened in the past through the bardic persona. The foregrounding of the narrator's voice, of his or her position in suturing the narrative, is most evident in moments when the story shifts in location or scene. We do not have an omniscient narrator in the manner of realist fiction. Here the "ako" of the narrator is declared and the address is directed at the readers (or as the *corrido* calls them, *nalilimping auditorio* 4) that reminds us of the narrative's performative frame as miming the bard's presence. This technique sutures us to the narrative's conceit of linear temporal unfolding.<sup>29</sup>

The convention in shifting a reader's orientation or attention, a kind of "cut" in film, or "gutter" in comics, is the narrator's spatialization of the narrative—the conceit that it is a scene that is to be left behind as we are directed to another one. In general the mode of narration attunes us back to what the characters are doing, as if spatializing a scene is only pertinent if connected to events happening to a character or to an encounter between them. In this way, the social field of the *pinagdaanan buhay* is stylistically foregrounded. It is in these moments that the narrator/bard exposes himself to his audience and reflexively draws them into the narrative. Here are some examples from the *Adarna*:

Marali,t, salit naman / At di co na paghabaan, / Ay naging apat na buan / Paglacad niya sa parang. (106)

Nguni aquin munang lisan / Ang pag-alis ni don Juan, / At ang aquing ipagsaysay / Ang hari niyang magulang. (272) Ito,i, aquing pabayaang / Nang paglalacád sa párang, / Ang aquing ipagsasaysay / Ang príncipeng si don Juan. (279)

Ipagparito co muna / Magcapataid na dalauá, / Ang paghanap sabhin pa / Cay don  
Juang bunsó nilá. (282)

Atin munang pabayaan / Ang paglalacad sa párang, / At ang aquing ipagsaysay /  
Ang hari nilang magulang. (388)

Ito,i, lisanin cong agad / Na sa haring napañgarap, / At ang aquing ipahayag / Ang  
apat na naglalacad. (390)

Aquing ipagbalic naman / Sa lobong pinacaulán, / Nang maquita si don Juan /  
Mañga lamóg ang catauan. (407)

Aquing lisanin na muna / Yaong paglalacad niya / At ang aquing ipagbadyá / Ang  
princesang si Leonora. (434)

Ito,i, itiguil co muna / Pananaghoy nang princesa, / At ang aquing ipagbadyá / Si  
don Juan de Berbania. (438)

The last two examples above, between stanza 434 and stanza 438, is a short episode discussing the complaints of Doña Leonora and is inserted into the story of Don Juan's search for the Reino de los Cristal of King Salermo and for his daughter Doña Maria's hand. The short episode depicting Leonora crying and calling Juan's ghost to her, intercuts Juan's narrative here to set the stage for Juan's romantic dilemma at the end. The common trope in *corrido* "editing" is leaving behind, returning or calling to mind, or to the imagination, an episode of the narrative. The rhetorical devices in such shifts as these include: claiming to no longer let the narration meander (temporal); leaving a scene of a specific act or actor to move to another actor (actual); calling to mind (evoking); or leaving behind a particular scene (spatial). The locus of the shift varies from the time of the narration, the characters, and the site of the event or experience.

Before and after such shifters, the narration takes on either the speech acts of characters or description of events. In an actual performance, the bard's "ako" would be quite clear, placing us in the position of narratee's, mediating our relationship to the narration through both the singer's social function in the performance event of the song itself. In each case of scene shifting, the narrator's "ako" emerges, drawing us along and allowing us to take on the mimetic voice of the bard's *badyá* ourselves as if we were reading

it out loud to our own “internal” listeners. I would like to suggest that in our act of reading and aided by the verse prosody’s rhythm and minimal punctuation, we fluctuate between taking on the narrator’s and the narratee’s positions. This oscillation between being the narratee’s, listening to a narrative given to us by the bard, and being the narrator ourselves provides differing subject positions in the actual unfolding of narration. But this oscillation sutures us into the narrative’s unfolding and enmeshes us in the field of exemplarity of the *corrido*’s *conjointure*.

Narrative texts, according to Paul Ricoeur, allow us to organize temporal experience and create stories of seemingly coherent subjectivity in a necessarily social field. The temporality of a text’s recitation or performance is a “public” time of gathering the community, where speakers and audiences interact with one another and constitute each other. Such a constitution may be seen as happening along at least two registers: the register of the narrative as a performance event, and the register of the narratives’ plot themselves. The quest narrative is, for Ricoeur, the pre-eminent genre of intervention and action. As Ricoeur argues:

these narratives in fact, represent a person acting, who orients him—or herself in circumstances he or she has not created, and who produces consequences he or she has not intended. This is indeed the time of the “now that...,” wherein a person is both abandoned and responsible at the same time. The dialectical character of this “now that....” appears however, only as it is unfolded narratively in the interplay between being able to act and being bound to the world order. (172)

Poised at the moment of this being able to act and being bound to the world order, characters and readers of quest narratives make manifest the paradox of narrativity as temporality in the narrative’s unfolding. Suturing the narratives, the shifts expose moments when we might see Paul Ricoeur’s point between acting and being bound to a word and world order in the act of reading.

Binding us to a world order through a grammar, similar to filmic intercutting here, sutures the narrative and situates us with regard to the ideological thematics of the *corrido*: the construction of an exemplary ethos for the *maginoo* and the taming of forces outside the colonial regime in the service of social and sexual reproduction of a Spanish colonial order that had the *principalía*, through their association with the clergy, as intermediaries of power during a period of transition in the Philippine modes of production and state-society relations. The *corrido* registers the anxiety of this class while providing the popular classes



with images of resolutions for the social contradictions of this transition. I propose that the temporal constitution of the subject through structures of recognition in narrativity is a kind of grammar to the ideological syntax and semantics of what Neferti Tadiar calls our “fantasy production” and that binds us to a specific historical world order. The oscillation between an authority that is Divine or transcendent to the networks of relations and an authority that is immanent from the performance of the *corrido's* narration, that supposedly derives from its audience’s approval, is a recognition of the limits of authorial power that literacy often attempts to mitigate and master. Semi—or secondarily oral—*corrido* chapbook that sutures the reader to the narrative through miming the bardic mediating social function, that attempts to stabilize meaning through an avowed moral, provide a slightly different grammar of recognition than film.

## FILM AND THE LINGUA FRANCA

Film in the Philippines was first introduced in the last years of the Spanish regime, mostly imports from Europe (Deocampo). The new colonial masters brought with them new colonial conditions and technologies, including experiments in cinematic narrative style (Del Mundo 58-9). Americans conducted most of the early film production in the islands, including films made by the Edison Manufacturing Company and the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company. It was in the 1920s that Filipinos began making films and developed a studio system in the 1930s. Del Mundo argues that Tagalog film resisted the onslaught of American film that dominated this early film market by adapting vernacular theatrical traditions to film. The first film by Filipinos in 1919 was *Dalagang Bukid*, a silent feature that had the original *sarsuela* performers sing their parts during the show. By the time LVN studios produced *Ibong Adarna* in 1941, the Philippines was a commonwealth of the United States and looking towards independence.

*Ibong Adarna*, adapted and directed by Vicente Salumbides with technical supervision by Manuel Conde, was the third year anniversary offering of LVN studios in 1941. By this time, the title no longer declares the moral of *kapatiran*, humility and laxity. Instead, the focus is on the marvelous bird and the marvels of film. While the *corrido* chapbook focuses on the ethos of the *maginoo* and the problem of appearances, the film celebrates the technological magic of filmic special effects. Like other Mila Del Sol LVN films such as *Giliw Ko* (1939) with Fernando Poe Sr., or *Sarung Banggi* (1947) with Rogelio de la Rosa and Rosa Rosal, *Ibong Adarna* foregrounds the production process of the magic of film and its capacity to generate spectacle (and the studio system’s stars). The first Tagalog

film with colorized sequences, it is the spectacle and the mystery of producing visual illusions—and Philippine LVN’s capacity to produce them—that *Adarna* marks. As part of this spectacle, the chapbook’s Occidentalism changes into a filmic Orientalism. Whereas the *corrido* was generally set in Europe and mediated an apprehension of Spanish colonial authority and power (even if the kingdom is called “Berbania”), the film is set in some vision of Arabia or an Islamic country that provides an exotic milieu much like the *Thief of Baghdad* (both the 1924 and 1940 versions) with which it has similarities. The film also has musical scenes between the primary characters and large scale dance numbers filmed in the manner of Hollywood musicals (or as del Mundo puts it, “Busby Berkeley-inspired dance”). Marking a colonial legacy, the film’s protagonists are all *mestizos* stars while all those who belong to the lower classes, or are the “familiar” and ogres, are dark figures.<sup>30</sup>

The film contained as many different kinds of special effects that LVN could technologically master at the time: the large outdoor scenes containing vistas of kingdoms from the sky, painted landscapes on glass shots; the fight between the giant and Don Juan and the dance of the miniature *negritos* (clearly in black face and dancing to non-*Negrito* music) towards the end showing discrepancy in size within one shot and frame; the eagle’s claws carrying Juan and Diego while the background moved or Doña Maria standing in the foreground while a shot of the mountain in the background moves to a close-up and gives the illusion of movement; the “time lapse” photography of Pedro and Diego turning to stone or of the mountain flattening and the wheat growing overnight; the changes in clothes of Doña Maria using a superimposition while a witness stands within the same frame in order to provide continuity; and of course the hand-colorized *Adarna* bird whose feathers change color with each song. These special effects are meant to amaze and hold the audience’s attention, to play tricks on perception and compel a response from the film’s viewers or addressees that marvel at film’s capacity for illusion.

The film’s plot generally follows the *corrido*’s, but without the careful incremental accretion, and play with destiny and temporality of the original’s *conjointure*. The spoken lines in the film are in prose that aims towards everyday speech as opposed to the formal cadence of the *corrido*’s verse prosody. The many Christian allusions of the *corrido* are decreased or excised from the filmic version. Instead of invoking the Virgin at the beginning as in the *corrido*, we have as the opening credits, an image of a storybook that begins with a “Once upon a time” [Noong unang panahon]. Instead of a bishop who can judge the suit for recognition and grievance of Maria and Leonora, we have a court minister. In the *corrido*, the content of the king’s self-fulfilling dream (Juan’s betrayal) is divulged, while in the film it is simply mentioned as a “magical dream” that has caused

his illness. Instead of the bird informing Juan of the princess in the sky, it is a disembodied voice that speaks like the hermit. While the voice informs Juan that hardship is necessary to get to Reino de los Cristales, in fact the princes are brought to Salermo's kingdom immediately by the bird through an act of magic by the disembodied voice. The three princes set out for the bird at the same time and all of them meet the hermit in order to show the cruelty of the other princes.<sup>31</sup>

The film attempts to tighten the causality of emplotment and diminish the impulse to domesticate a recalcitrant feminine supernatural that Doña Maria portrayed in the *corrido* version. Instead of two princesses from beneath the earth, there is only one and instead of one princess from Cristales, now there are two. Don Diego, the second prince, played a relatively small narrative function in the *corrido* aside from a slightly less evil brother than Pedro. In the film however, Don Diego now accompanies Don Juan to the Kingdom de los Cristales and marries Doña Isabel, sister of Doña Maria, rather than Doña Juana, sister of Doña Leonora from beneath the earth as he does in the *corrido*. In the *corrido*, Doña Leonora is not possessed of magic or familiars. It is Diego who rescues Juan from the well. The fear in the film is that Don Juan's profession of love for Doña Maria is caused only by Doña Maria's magic. It is Don Diego in the film that confirms Doña Maria's claim to Don Juan's love to be true, which apparently in the world of LVN has more purchase than prior promises and contracts. It is Don Diego who suggests the tri-marriage that ends the film and who inherits the throne of Berbania, and not Don Pedro as in the *corrido*. In the film, heaven, earth and underworld are divided clearly among the princes and their wives: Juan in Cristales, Diego in Berbania and Pedro under the earth. These changes in the plot make the story more logical and by-pass the need for Doña Maria to threaten the people of Berbania, and for the king to admit defeat before her magic. Doña Maria can then be most clearly and unambiguously an example of womanly strength and virtue. In this way, the film version attempts to flatten and resolve the contradictions that the *corrido* contains. Yet the film, like the *corrido*, also contains an excess beyond this regulatory capacity of narrative structure.

The *corrido* thematizes appearances and truth, as well as obligations for and of the *principalía*, while the film version circulates these questions to an anonymous mass audience through the power of the cinematic image that constitutively plays with appearances and illusion. The film enraptures us with the magic of the camera's special effects and sutures us to the narrative through the gaze and the use of images available as common reference points in a sort of widely disseminated and studio mediated *lingua franca*. The *lingua franca* is a concept of an ideal communicative medium of exchange. James

Siegel argues that in Indonesia, the emergence of a *lingua franca* based upon low or market Malay, particularly in commercial presses and literary publications, meant there was a medium of communication that was by definition egalitarian and free.<sup>32</sup> It did not belong to anybody but arose out of interaction and encounters, particularly in the marketplace (rather than being associated with the Javanese courts). It allowed, and to a certain extent required, people to place themselves in the position of another regardless of nationality as they groped for understanding. The “I” of the *lingua franca* was a position available to anyone, and in fact encouraged acts of “overhearing” or listening in on communication that was not meant for “certain” people, particularly the natives. What this meant, Siegel argues, is that in the Dutch East Indies colonial context where stable identities are necessary for colonial discipline, the leveling force of the *lingua franca*, its capacity for heteroglossia, was seen as a threat by colonial authorities. In this case, the address’ dissemination exceeded the capacity of the addressor to regulate recognition. Consequently, Dutch colonial authorities that used Malay as a *lingua franca* needed to police and regulate the economy of its promise and its circulatory power.

According to Siegel, the colonial language and education policies that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the Dutch East Indies responded to the inherently politically dangerous potential of the *lingua franca* that could and did destabilize colonial rule. “The *lingua franca* cannot make anything legitimate. Rather, it forges a connection to authority and demonstrates its own force” (67). Citing incidents when laws that strove to maintain clear and transparent identities for the colonial regime’s disciplinary purposes were broken in literature, photography and film, Siegel points out that

anyone stopped for breaking the law of disguise could reflect that he did indeed have a force he never suspected himself of possessing. ... after the fact he sees he has a force of communication that is outside the law and that unwittingly reaches it. (93)

The capacity to communicate, Siegel argues, is linked to a power of action, to a kind of agency that is dispersed in a communicative field. The emergence of various modern media technologies brings with it then an increased awareness of the capacity to transgress against, even as it facilitates, the more intense governmental intrusions into technologies of the self. The power of communication, believed to have belonged to the Dutch colonial powers, Siegel argues, now becomes available in a new way to the natives. However, the need to provide legitimacy and recognition still persisted. Siegel argues that the institution that finally answered this need in Indonesia was the nationalist movement and then the

nationalized state. In the end, according to Siegel, the state provided recognition and thereby ensured that the “legislating body” maintained the same structural organization and relationship with the nation even after the upheaval of the revolution.

In contrast to the chapbook, the emphasis on spectacle and special effects, the movement of camera angles and editing, suggests that the spectators in the *Adarna* potentially experience what Eva-Lotta Hedman, following James Seigel, calls a “visualized *lingua franca*” that partially explains the popular appeal of Philippine Cinema.<sup>33</sup> In this view, watching visual images created for mass consumption provided a new structure of communicative relation that did not exist before. For Hedman, a visualized *lingua franca* is “unburdened by tradition, hierarchy, and easily accessible to a wide spectrum of the population,” and that revealed to an audience “new structural formations of the subject” (5). While the literary tale can articulate an avowed pedagogical claim, in his discussion of the film *Nyai Dasima*, Siegel argues that the film’s

claim is not the moral value of the story, but that the perfection and the clarity of the film hold attention. Thus, the identifications we have described are allowed to take place. The audiences of the movie seem to have moved behind the intentions of the story to be gripped instead by the process of production. (75)

While swept up into the process of producing these visions, the technological tricks needed to make these visions are meant to be a mystery. The audience’s attention is gripped by the process of producing marvelous visions and exposed to their finitude in the shadowy images. Hiding the technological mediation that could stand as a barrier to the affective power of the images however also means that the audience perceives that there is even the possibility that, as Siegel suggests, “all characters are equitable with any member of the audience” (75). Enamored with the special effects, the audience does not necessarily ask about the meaning of the images in terms of the psychological motivations of the characters, nor in terms of the complex social map diegetically presented to them that attempts to regulate, order, and organize this chain of subject positions. Siegel argues that the cinematic function “sweeps up viewers, enabling them to think “I” in the form of another and another and another” (74) in a serialized syntagmatic chain.

In Siegel’s terms, the film’s actors gaze at the audience incapable of receiving a response from the audience, and the audience gaze at the actors attempting to apprehend the message behind the opaque images. The cinematic gaze of course is actually heavily structured, as I will argue below, but the images haunt because they address the viewers as

“you” and expose something of their terrible finitude. In a way, positioned and addressed as a “you,” hailed and interpellated by the film, the audience as a community of viewers needs to respond. Hedman speculates that cinematic images demanded recognition and provided Tagalog audiences with the desire for recognition themselves, a recognition that they could not truly receive from the films, even as the films set this desire in motion and capitalized on it. She argues that they saw “there was a message in the first place, a message in circulation beyond the purview of tradition, hierarchy, and authority as inscribed in the dominant culture” (17). The message was not however, simply a message of content or of a moral from a dominant culture that was visibly comprehended (though that too). She suggests that the message apprehended in Tagalog film was a power of communication. The film version of the *corrido* opens up the possibility of the audience’s (mis)identification, and their desire for proper and authentic recognition from ghostly images. Hedman suggests that the capacity of the visualized *lingua franca* to set loose communicative power, to displace authority through opaque images and inhabiting, possessing or haunting the audience, generates the desire for a response and recognition which is displaced upon celebrity cults. Celebrities metonymically gain the communicative power that the film engenders. Their populist aura emerges from the intimacy felt with their imagistic power.<sup>34</sup>

In the scene where Doña Maria has been forgotten by Don Juan, she stages a drama with the help of her *negrito* familiars. The *mise-en-scene* is quite static with the stage and the miniature *negritos* at the center and the royals arranged in decreasing rank. Only the *pusong* or Chaplinesque character (who does not exist in the *corrido* but is a common enough *komedya* character) breaks with this arrangement. In the scene when the *negrita* whips the *negrito* each time he claims that he does not recognize or remember Doña Maria and when Don Juan feels the pain of the whip in his body, we generally see the *negrita*’s arm rise and the whip descend, but we don’t see it connect. When we do see the whip connect a couple of times, there is no close-up reaction shot of the *negrito* feeling the pain. Instead the camera cuts to a shot of either Doña Maria or else we see the pain on Juan’s face. This is a technique that the film employed in the earlier scene where Juan wounds himself during the *Adarna*’s song: the editing cut taking the place of our watching as he cuts himself. As the camera moves from character to character gaze, the thematic content of recognition, body’s pain and identification gains an additional function. However, what is important to notice is that the camera’s angle is never from the position of the black-faced *negritos*. Even when Doña Maria addresses the *negritos* directly, what could have been a shot-reverse-shot is simply a direct head shot of the princess rather than from the angle of the miniature *negritos*.



This scene leads to the scene of judgment. The film, like the *corrido*, does not speak in terms of class struggle. Instead the themes of an ethos of the *maginoo* as honor and love is presented as a question of justice. The final scene of the film is a scene of judgment that, unlike the *corrido*, depends on a witness' testimony. The presence of witnesses in the film for continuity purposes (i.e., those whose reactions can signal that a marvel has occurred) and even the testimony of Diego himself, point to a shift in understanding verisimilitude and virtue in the film. The necessity for verifiable fact, like the syntagmatic chain of subject positions in the camera's work, also empowers witnesses as experiential authorities rather than simply by virtue of their position. The access Diego has to the court is because he is the prince, but the King recognizes Diego's testimony because he speaks as a witness, not necessarily because he is the prince. Thus being a witness is on the one hand enough to validate testimony, on the other hand it requires access in order to be recognized: it must occur in the presence of a sovereign body.<sup>35</sup>

While the bardic performance might provide a loop or return gaze from the singer, or the chapbook ends with the affirmation of the reader's capacity to correct or fill the gaps of the text (*Cun sa letra ay sumala /Capupunán ay cayo na 1034*), the film releases the desire for recognition but does not provide a sufficient response to this desire. The audience can suture themselves to illusory identifications, and take on the ideological content of the camera's positioning and the narrative arc. We can occupy the positions of Maria and Juan in a way we could not in the chapbook's narration. While the scene shifts in the *corrido* discussed above foregrounded the performative frame of the bard's mediation of the story, the editing and the camera work of the film attempt to hide its mediation in the interest of the spectacle and the marvelous. In Hedman's view, the desire for recognition seeks a legitimate authority to take the place of the bardic voice.

The ideological content given by the camera and the narrative arc are insufficient to the affective capture of attention. The serialization of subjectivity in the film haunts the audience and demands a response and a politics *outside* of the film. The capacity of the camera to catalyze this desire is belied by the narrative's conventionality and the racial dynamics of the *negritos* and the primarily *mestizo* actors and actresses who become reified objects of desire to our gaze. The narrative closure, and the film's capacity to yoke affectively the structure of recognition elicited by cinema, frustrates what might be considered film's liberatory desubjectification. Suturing into the film's narrative to provide an apparently coherent subject position is an illusion, but a compelling one and is clearly part of its appeal. Similar to the *corrido's* narrative techniques that provide spaces to constitute social fields, film also activates subject formation through a desired

identification. Thus even though film perhaps promises the recognition of a visualized *lingua franca* and releases a potentially transformative desire for recognition, the foreclosure by the narrative that reinstates conservative structures (both in the *corrido* and in the film) suggests something about what Hedman reminds us: “of the decidedly conservative limitations of populism itself as political project and vision” (23).

The capacity to imagine the “I” in a syntagmatic serialized chain rather than a paradigmatic hierarchized network of narrator and narratee mediated by the bard as in the *corrido*, functions in Philippine film, it seems, to provide on the one hand a space of entertainment and wish-fulfillment, but also on the other a desire that this kind of recognition be given in real life—that the State be responsive to the whippings of *negritos* on the screen and remember their obligations of justice to the people. What Philippine scene of sovereignty or collective body such recognition can or ought to occur remains to be explored. Here I would like to suggest the need for art to reminds us of the “sakit ng bansa” and the situations that still require bodily pain. In this sense, Haring Fernando’s dream of betrayal and fratricide, and the message of the *Adarna*’s song haunt us still.

## NOTES

1 Northrop Frye, in *The Secular Scripture*, suggests that aristocratic romances were kidnapped by the ascendant bourgeoisie. He sketches the relationship between a declining aristocratic, ascending bourgeois and emerging proletarian desires (see particularly pages 54, 173-80). Jameson's *Political Unconscious* supplements this argument by making Marxism the final (critical) horizon through and for which these utopic desires may be glimpsed, understood and realized. In the Philippines as I hope is clear from the discussion below, the issue of ascendancy and decline of the 'bourgeois class' and its relationship to the romance is slightly different than the one discussed by Frye.

2 Technically an *awit* is a metrical romance with twelve syllables per line while a *corrido* has only eight. Both however use quatrains with mono-rhymes in the Tagalog manner, namely the rhyme is carried by the final vowel sound, regardless of the last consonant. Scholars have tried to define the precise difference between these two terms (one deals with more religious while the other more heroic tales, one is more indigenous and the other taken from the Hispanic *rima perfecta* metrics, one is chanted and the other sung, etc...), but thus far the most convincing generic distinction lies in their prosody. The vast majority of the romances are actually *awits*. For the rest of the paper they will be used interchangeably.

3 Many romances have multiple versions in the same dialect, and cross-over into other dialect groups as well. Damiana Eugenio speculates however that most of the romances originated in the Tagalog region. See her *Awit and Corrido*.

4 For arguments about cultures of capital, modernity and simultaneous multiple temporalities, see Nestor Garcia Canclini and Harry Harootunian.

5 Nick Deocampo argues against this thesis. By foregrounding the Spanish influences in and origins of Philippine cinema rather than its contrapuntal relationship to American film production and techniques, Deocampo sees in early film's continuation of Hispanic colonial influences more adaptation than outright resistance. Deocampo reserves the term resistance to more directly nationalist and anti-colonial material and techniques.

6 The term "secondary orality" comes from Walter Ong, and here denotes oral texts that emerge out of a context of literacy, or an orality that depends upon a world of literacy, print and technology. Most *corridos* were translations from Spanish chapbooks and themselves allude to a written Christian tradition for sources of legitimacy.

7 See Elena Rivera Mirano's *Ang Mga Tradisyonal na Musikang Pantinig sa Lumang Bauan, Batangas* (NCCA: Manila, 1997) for a discussion of the performance of *awit* and *corrido* in Batangas up to recent times.

8 More work needs to be done in the printing, authorship and circulation of chapbooks and the formation of "publics" in the nineteenth century. See Vince Rafael, *Promise of the Foreign*; see also Smita Lahiri, and Patricia May B. Jurilla.

9 Patrick Flores has gone so far as to call Tagalog films by the oxymoron "cinematic folklore" that points to its being mass mediated and industrial, as well as folkloric in significance, particularly with regard to the practice of the everyday. See Patrick Flores, "The Dissemination of Nora Aunor," in Rolando Tolentino (eds.), *Geopolitics of the Visible*.

10 For a fuller discussion of subject-forms and its relationship to emergent bourgeois public spheres and ideological critique, see Tom Lewis, "Religious Subject-Forms: Nationalism, Literature, and the Consolidation of *Moderantismo* in Spain During the 1840's."

11 Corrine Kratz hypothesizes, for example, that the persistence and persuasive power of female circumcision with active female participation, derives partly in the manner in which the ritual performatively constitutes community and subjectivity through dialogic singing. Here the emergence of a poetic form through performance provides the girl a kind of Heideggerian existential structure to apprehend experience, and consequently a connection to community. Cited and discussed in Berger and Del Negro.

12 The entry also contains *representación* as a meaning for *maginoo*, as the *maginoo*, a title for the *principalía* class, was also an elected official in the Spanish bureaucracy starting from the late eighteenth century. The play on the title and the gap between the true and false representative/acts of representation gains extra figural value, particularly given *Adarna's* thematic focus on truth and appearance.

13 "An *awit* like *Florante at Laura* ... takes the princely, kingly personages seriously. It admits, of course, that there are criminal princes. But their royalty has nothing to do with their crimes, except to magnify their ambit of possible harm. The theme is not the wickedness of power. On the contrary, it extols royal power. It tries to show what marks legitimate power—the power before which people must submit" (75). I disagree with so quick an evaluation of the *awit*, most especially of *Florante at Laura*. Nonetheless, Hornedo seems onto something when he claims that "In their social degradation, *datus* and other members of the ancient ruling classes brought with them the stories of their past ... This means that what we call "folk literature" today encompasses the literature of the precolonial ruling classes" (78).

14 See for example how he contrasts the lampooning and carnivalesque power of the *pilandok* or *kancila* folk tales (which he says have the persona of the *taumbayan*) and the somber humorless stories or legends of royalty (78).

15 See Vince Rafael's *The Promise of the Foreign* for a discussion of this tension and dichotomy in the *komedya*'s act of translation, its incorporation of foreign words within itself, and its potentially radical trajectories in its communal performance as proto-public spheres.

16 See his *Contracting Colonialism* and his more recent *The Promise of the Foreign*.

17 Some of this power, as I shall discuss below, could very well be the spirit world or the supernatural. See for example Fenella Cannell's *Power and Intimacy in Lowland Christian Philippines* for a discussion of proximity and power.

18 This term denotes translators and helpers of the priests in the Philippine context, in contrast to its usage in Latin America or Spain. Some these Filipinos were probably tri-lingual with Spanish, Latin and an indigenous vernacular as well.

19 For a description of the bureaucratic changes in the late Spanish regime, see Eliodoro Robles, *The Philippines in the Nineteenth Century*. The significance of the Claveria decree that provided *indios* with surnames, (a privilege previously granted to *principalía* only), in order to improve labor migration and registering taxes and tribute is an index of these changes.

20 See Trinidad Pardo de Tavera's *The Legacy of Ignorantism*. Also found excerpted in a book published by The Bureau of Printing; Eliseo Quirino and Vicente Hilario eds. *Thinking for Ourselves*. (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1924). That The Bureau of Printing published this speech and circulated it in both English and Spanish is significant. Pardo de Tavera's speech, republished in the newspapers, caused a public debate about religion, morality and public education for almost an entire year. See the Pardo de Tavera Collection at the Ateneo University Library.

21 In the *Adarna corrido*, it is interesting to note that the hermits call their animal familiars by ringing the *campana*.

22 From *Colección de Corridos Presentada por El Excmo. Sr. D. V. Barrantes, Apéndice* of the *Catalogo de la exposicion general de las islas filipinas celebra en Madrid, 1887*; from the Carlos Ronquillo Collection of the Philippine National Library. The Barrantes collection is now at the Newberry Library in Chicago.

23 With its thematic content based on song and dance, one might even call it a “melodrama.” For discussions of the importance of family as a network for community relations in the Philippines, see for example Clemen Aquino and Prospero Covar.

24 For discussions of possible folk resonances and further significance of this trope, see Katrin de Guia.

25 In this regard, the canonical *Florante at Laura* is an exception among Philippine metrical romances.

26 See Aquino’s discussion of *kapatiran* in the works of Prospero Covar and the various fellowships on Mount Banahaw.

27 In the narrative, like the incremental motif technique, this is a preparation for the tests Haring Salermo extracts from Doña Maria’s suitors and mirrors his punishment for them, i.e., he also turns them to stone.

28 Here I use “mimesis” very narrowly to mean the moments when a singer takes on the speech acts that supposedly belong to a character in the text. It is interesting to note at this point that according to Vicassan’s Tagalog Dictionary, a term commonly used in the *corrido ipagbadyá*, as in stanza 438 below, has the sense of assertion, statement and declaration, but also secondary meaning of mimicry, imitation and parody.

29 I say “conceit,” because as a chapbook one can read by skipping or going back to other parts of the narrative and the sequence is on the level of the sentence. In actual performance, one assumes the bard is free to extemporize, elaborate, ad-lib or mix sequences.

30 Del Mundo argues: “*Ibong Adarna* is a colonial movie and it has not escaped the influence of Hollywood. The casting of the mestizo stars ... unwittingly [*sic*] creates the barrier of class distinctions and dictates the colonizer’s norms of beauty... [it] manifests the colonizer’s way of looking at the natives, the “niggers” as the lowly characters in society, that undermines the parodistic and transgressive possibilities of the original source of this moro-moro movie” (87).

31 The introduction of a Chaplinesque character as the *pusong* is another major difference. The list could go on.

32 In practice of course, such discourse would have been situated within specific social encounters and maps. The point though is that the *lingua franca* could bleed beyond these situated usages, and was thus difficult to control.



33 See also Vicente Rafael, "Taglish, or the Phantom Power of the Lingua Franca" for other discussions of the *lingua franca* in the Philippines.

34 This is partly her explanation for *Eruption*, and in many ways is precisely the plaint and vain refrain of Nora Aunor in *Himala* that Neferti Tadiar discusses: "*Walang himala. Tayo ang gumagawa ng himala!*" See Neferti Tadiar's *Fantasy Production*.

35 The distinctions then between Diego's testimony at the end, the *Adarna's* narration of Juan's adventures and the *negrita's* punishment of the *negrito* for non-recognition of her testimony articulate a different mode of truth-telling from that in the *corrido*.

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