

## MEMORY OF VOICE

NICOLE REVEL

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*In today's world, an outstanding poetic and musical heritage is present in living memories and practices among many Austronesian languages and cultures. In spite of the many studies conducted since World War II, a great deal remains to be listened to, collected, safeguarded, transcribed, translated, analyzed, and comprehended. Modern technologies are now available which can be explored and developed in our respective attempts to do so.*

*This paper focuses on the Nusantara region, the Western branch of the Austronesian family, and more particularly on the Philippines, where, since 1992, we have begun to build up a 'Philippine Oral Epics Archive', based at the Ateneo de Manila University. This tridimensional audio, audio-video, and computerized archive will be presented briefly.*

*A pluridisciplinary approach is employed in order to capture a 'mental text' and its elaboration in performance. Specific aspects considered include:*

- *the role of deixis related to action and text processing, particularly in repetitive segments and in the macrostructure of the plot;*
- *the close relationship between words and music;*
- *the projection of time in space in establishing the first manuscript of a sung poetic composition.*

*The referential knowledge encapsulated in the narratives and the teachings they convey, will be successively referred to and illustrated. Finally, epic singing is analyzed as a vocal 'skilled activity'.*

*Linguistics, Ethnography, Ethnomusicology, and Cognitive Linguistics-Anthropology will contribute to our understanding of this creative process.*

**1. Introduction**

A new communication space is opening, and new types of memory have emerged. On the one hand, we keep our tradition for books, while on the other

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hand, we have to enter and master the new technologies, we have to explore the potentialities they are offering us.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, I have implemented a program of preservation of an Intangible Heritage in the Philippines, among the national communities where what I call the 'literature of the voice' is a genuine, ancient, and contemporary treasure. This safeguarding involves the very people concerned, for this attempt is based on my initial experience in collaboration, since 1970, with the Katutubong Palawan in the southern part of Palawan island.

Elder knowledgeable people and younger ones trained in anthropology, linguistics, folklore, and/or ethnomusicology are being given the opportunity to gather their cultural heritage with modern tools and support, a set of tertiary retention devices. (See B. Steigler, *Les Techniques et le Temps*, vol II.)

I have worked with many people according to their interests, requests, and needs. I have been with them in the highlands or at sea, when the situation permitted, recording, videotaping the performances, making spontaneous workshops in ethnopoetics with the singer of tales, the shamans, and some members of the audience in order to bring out the formal rules of composition while establishing the first, or one of the first, manuscripts. For we have to project on a white space a 'mental text', listened to and deciphered by ear as the singer of tales is performing the sung narrative. This first manuscript generates a different kind of retention. The restitution of the performance of an oral poem, the

Ateneo de Manila University  
Philippine Oral Epics

### Summary Report as of 21 March 2005

GENRE (ETHNIC)	DESCRIPTION
DARANGEN(MARANAO)	Radia Dimacaling: "The Unmoved Raja"
DARANGEN	Radia Dimacaling: "The Unmoved Raja"
DARANGEN	Radia Dimacaling: "Raha Dimating"
DARANGEN	Radia Tawantawan, an introduction
DARANGEN	Saber sa Radapan, an introduction
HUDHUD (IFUGAO)	Aliguyon Nak Amtalao: "Aliguyon, Son of Amtalao"
HUDHUD	Aliguyon Nak Binenwahan: Aliguyon, Son of Binenwahan"
HUDHUD	Bugan an Imbayagda: "Bugan, the Rejected Child"
HUDHUD	Bugan Nak Panga'iwan: "Bugan, Daughter of Panga'iwan"
HUDHUD	Hudhud in Viernes Santo (an Ifugao version of Pasyon)
KATA-KATA	Lumujum Sahaya: "Foretelling the Truth"
KATA-KATA	Magusaha/Usaha Dilaut: "Fishing Ventures in the Sea"
KATA-KATA	Si Beang Kuting Maka, Si Beag Eroq, "Friend Cat and Friend Dog"
KATA-KATA	Tuan Sultan Galuraq
KATA-KATA	Puruk Kaq Indal Bungsu

safeguarding of a vocal and musical heritage involving multimedia supports, then operates another kind of shift.

**2. Philippine Oral Epics Archives (1992-2001)**

We have three sets of data: sound archive, video-sound archive, and computerized texts with transcriptions in the respective phonologies of 16 vernacular languages of the Philippines and two of Indonesia, with translations in vehicular languages, either English, Tagalog, French, or Malay depending upon the one who established the first manuscript and his linguistic competence. We have used the phonologies, lexicons, and dictionaries established by linguists and anthropologists. The work of Reid compiling phonologies and basic features and publishing them in *Minor Languages of the Philippines* (1977) was of great help.

The sound documents we have gathered are not yet digitized and, therefore, are fragile. They are the most precious part of the conservation. They are not accessible to the public and are kept in a metallic cabinet in a room at a constant temperature of 16 degrees, 150 lux maximum, non magnetic, with 50% hygrometry. In the short term they need to be digitalized and duplicated on CD, CD-Rom, DVD-Rom, or DVD-Video.

The text documents are kept independently in the form of manuscripts and diskettes. In the long run, I hope they will be accessible through a combined sound and vision-on-screen installation.

For the time being we have established 67 manuscripts on paper and digital supports. For active safeguarding, the ideal solution would be to have a server with a computer engineer trained in data bases as well as a technician trained in sound

TAPES		MSS		DISK	ALBUM/PHOTOS	DATE
AUDIO/VIDEO		ORIG/TRANS				
6	1†	1	1			MAR-AUG96
1	1†					02MAR01
		1	1	1		
1						06DEC97
1						06DEC97
4	1†	1	1			26FEB93
6		1	1	1	30	25FEB93
4		1	1	1		1995
5		1	1	1	6	JUN95
1						11MAY93
2		1	1	1*	2	03MARC97
1		1	1	*	1	28FEB97
1		1	1	*	1	MAR97
						15NOV96
2		1	1	*	1	
1		1	1	*	1	OCT96

\* All in 1 disk †VHS tape ‡CD ROM § Book

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GENRE (ETHNIC)	DESCRIPTION
KISSA	Kissa kan Parang Sabil Baddun
KISSA	Kissa ma si Jawaji
KISSA	Masa Libayan
KISSAQ	Kissaq Sin Lupaꝓ Sug Nakauna
KISSAQ (PARANG SABIL)	Parang Sabil Jikiri
LINGON TUDBULUL (T'BOLI)	Kelob le Benwu Tudbulul Lemlunay
LINGON TUDBULUL	Kebut Tudbulul: "The Origin of Tudbulul"
LINGON TUDBULUL	Tudbulul Ne Ngaq: "Tudbulul and the..."
LINGON TUDBULUL	Tudbulul Snalu Libun
LINGON TUDBULUL	Apo ni Bolinayen: "Bolinayen's Lady Master"
MAMAN	Istolya ni Gumigiteng
MAMAN	Istolya ti Papasyal...
MAMAN	Si Babey a Duliman...
MAMAN	Abdulla Iban Hi Putlig Sara
PARANG SABIL	Kissaq Kan Datuꝓ Sarikalaꝓ
PARANG SABIL	Pagbunuꝓ ha Bud Dahuꝓ
PARANG SABIL	Tuwan Nahudaꝓ
SAQIL (TAOSUG)	Sindilan (Sambung laung)...
SINDILAN	Derikaryong Pada
SUGIDANON	Humadapnon; also erroneously referred to as Hinilawod epic
SUGIDANON	Humadapnon: Episodes I-IV
TAD'OM	Untitled
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Datuꝓ at Pänärängsangan (1 <sup>st</sup> night)
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Datuꝓ at Pänärängsangan (2 <sup>d</sup> night)
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Datuꝓ at Pänärängsangan (3 <sup>d</sup> night)
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Datuꝓ at Pänärängsangan (4 <sup>th</sup> night)
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Datuꝓ at Pänärängsangan (5 <sup>th</sup> night)
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Datuꝓ at Pänärängsangan (6 <sup>th</sup> night)
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Käswwakan; "Branches Brises," "Broken Twigs"
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Mamiminbin
TULTUL (PALAWAN)	Si Tiyaw: "The Mayna Bird"
TULTUL (TAGBANUA)	Pala'isgen: "Ang Epiko ng Tagbanua"

\* All in 1 disk †VHS tape ‡CD ROM § Book

and video to take care of an expanding archive of this kind.

In order to store and publish, we have to choose either a support that combines the three elements, sound plus synchronized transcription and translation into one or two languages in mirror-like presentation, as I did in the CD-Rom of *Mämiminbin* (2004) according to the computer program developed since 2000 by M. Jacobson at LACITO (Internet site: <http://lacito.archivage.vjf.cnrs.fr>), to which I added a hypertext contextualizing the epic, or an audio file accompanying a book as in the DVD-video, another attempt I realized in 2005 for *Silungan Baltapa* in collaboration with A. Martenot and two technical assistants for audiovisual and multimedia at the CNRS, Centre Andre-Georges Haudricourt, Villejuif.

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TAPES AUDIO/VIDEO	MSS ORIG/TRANS	DISK	ALBUM/PHOTOS	DATE
		1		
	1	1		30AUG98
	1	1		21AUG98
				1997
2				
1				20NOV97
4				13SEP95
3	1			26FEB95
6	1†		1	28
2				25NOV97
2				26NOV97
				1988-1990
1	1	1		1988-1990
1	1	1		1988-1990
2	1	1		1988-1990
1	1	1		2
1				30OCT97
				1998
1&.5				1998
.5				28OCT97
1	1			21AUG98
	1	1		NOV94
7				AUG-NOV93
24	7	7		47
24	1†		3	50
1				JUN88
1				21JUL90
4				10AUG91
2				25JUL92
5				04JUL03
8	1		1	19AUG95
4				09JUL90
2				25JUL92
	1‡	1	2	1‡
	1			8
2			1	1971
6	1	1		24
				06SEPT93

\* All in 1 disk †VHS tape ‡CD ROM § Book

I would like to mention we worked with 19 collaborators in 16 different languages as I was conducting this program of safeguarding an Intangible Heritage in the Philippines from 1992 to 2000. Some of them are here today and I want to express to them my deep appreciation for their endeavor, their physical as well as intellectual commitment through the years. Some of them are sadly no longer among us: Lourdes Dulawan, with her deep mastery of *budbud* language, and Rita Cembrano, with her profound attachment and commitment to the national communities of Mindanao, particularly Agusan Manobo singers of tales.

I also want to express, in the name of all, our gratitude for the financial support of the French Embassy, on the one hand, which provided four grants per

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GENRE	DESCRIPTION
ULAGING (TALAANDIG)	Agyu: Beautiful-Eyebrow-Line
ULAGING	Agyu: an untitled episode 2
ULAGING	Agyu: Bunwahen kagwasen: "Handsome jolly men"
ULAGING	Agyu: Dayandayan ta Yandan: "Gem of the calm realm"
ULAGING	Agyu: Nabayaw ha dayuen: "Praise Sun"
ULAGING	Agyu: Paigrayu
ULAGING	Agyu: Yumuganud Ku Bagyu: "Strong Wind"
ULAGING	Pamada and Song to the deity of Honey
ULLALIM (KALINGA)	An-Aksa: "The Return of the Precious Beads"
ULLALIM	Swidden planting as Jaime Galnawan context to epic in Kalinga
ULLALIM	Unity
ULLALIM	Untitled
ULLALIM	Untitled
ULLALIM	Untitled
ULLALIM	Untitled
ULLALIM	Untitled
ULLALIM	Untitled
UWEGING (AGUSAN MANOBO)	Untitled
HAGAWHAW	Hagawhaw Ceremony of the Ikalahan
HAGAWHAW	Hagawhaw: "Story of the Hagawhaw"
HAGAWHAW	Ngayaw: "Headhunting"
PASYON	Pasyong Mahal ni Jesus...
PASYON	Pasyon, Night Procession in Malolos
PASYON	Pasyon, Viernes Santo in Laguna de Bay
TOD'OM	Tod'om: Gawa-gawa Apo Nilomboan
TOTAL: [20]	[76]
* All in 1 disk †VHS tape ‡CD ROM § Book	

year during nine years to do the work *in situ* in close collaboration with the singers of tales, and the Ateneo de Manila University, on the other hand, which shelters the Philippine Oral Epics Archives and where, every year since 2001, I have been invited to teach in collaboration with anthropologist Dr. F. Zialcita and philosopher Dr. L. Garcia in order to continue the work of analysis and interpretation.

### 3. Epics as literature of voice

Literatures of voice are simultaneously action, context, and process in the here and now. They are characterized by the demand of a faithful memory, the part of fixity, and the inalienable aptitude to vary, the part of creativity. In the context of an aural-oral tradition, transmission of knowledge is based on reiteration, and there are many modalities according to the various cultures: faithful repetition, with many diverse mnemonic devices, and/or various spaces for creativity and variation from a given pattern.

As it is chanted, an epic recalls a knowledge and a 'savoir être' in a given world. Through the medium of music, a language, a poetic, it exalts an ensemble

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TAPES		MSS		DISK	ALBUM/PHOTOS	DATE
AUDIO/VIDEO		ORIG/TRANS				
10		1	1		12	09-10SEP94
5		1				06AUG94
7		1	1		6	25APR93
	2†	1	1	1		07MAY95
7		1	1	1	12	04AUG93
3						21MAY93
6		1	1+1§		20	20MAY93
1						03AUG93
6	5			1	25	1994
	1					1994
1						31AUG94
1						NOV94
	1					1994
	2					1994
2						1994
	3					1994
3				1‡		01AUG00
4		1				04JUL99
		1	1			MAY04
		1	1			(n.d.)
10	2†		1	1‡		13-14APR2K
	1†					
	1†					
1		1	1	1	59	10-11DEC99
[232]	[25]	[52]	[42]	[24]	[334]	

of values, of cosmogonic views, social, customary, and ethical rules. With an often implicit social fresco as a background and a whole set of references, the plot develops between protagonists: actors, helpers, opponents (les ‘actants’, les ‘adjuvants’, les ‘opposants’) and imparts a coherence to the story, I mean to say, a coherence to the intentions, the actions, and the behavior of each protagonist that weaves and unfolds a plot.

Human voice, the very unique presence and the sensitive-abstract work of the singer of tales as he composes, the virtual presence of the ‘mental text’ (Revel, 1996) that precedes any attempt to fix the song or the narrative on a tangible support, are the very subject-matter upon which I invite you to reflect today.

The sung narrative unfolds as a very elaborate vocal gesture. The epic sets in motion a mental capacity of concentration and memorization of the singer of tales as well as the capacity to build, out of a succession, a configuration for a ‘mental text’ composed of narrative elements and generic rules for reproduction and creation. This verbal art affects the sensitivity and stimulates multiple emotions among members of the audience for the art of listening is at the same time pleasure and affirmation of a real presence. Hence

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we are, somehow, blind witnesses of many cognitive and multimodal motor activities, extremely elaborated and co-ordinated.

We shall try to focus successively upon some of these various mental processes and their mastery by way of performance and textual analysis.

### 4. The singer of tales and his singing body: a phenomenological intertwining of language and music

The knowledge and perpetration of an epic rest upon various perceptive, motor, and innovative skills: vocal action together with body postures and movements, the skill of composing and building up an emplotment, which is relevant to logic and imagination.

A sung narrative, *èpos*, displays, firstly, a specific voice, a timbre with one prevalent color or several colors, an ambitus, a tessitura, rhythms and melodies during the *proferato* (Zumthor, 1987); a living motion of sung speech and its moving fragile uniqueness, its fugacity in space and time.

The embodiment of poetry invites a particular mode of hearing. In this case, a voice, music, body movements, and a beautiful story are closely linked. Aural, visual, abstract, and emotional dimensions weave an artistic composition. Voice is the carrier of uttered words, a mental text is set in sound, long and complex ideas are developed in various kinds and forms of discourse (descriptions, dialogues, monologues, addresses to the audience). This materiality of the body that comes through the voice and affects the listeners at the level of personal pleasure, this 'grain of voice' as formulated by Barthes (1977), also has a specific social life, which we shall go back to later.

Beyond this subtle and concrete matter, what is really happening?

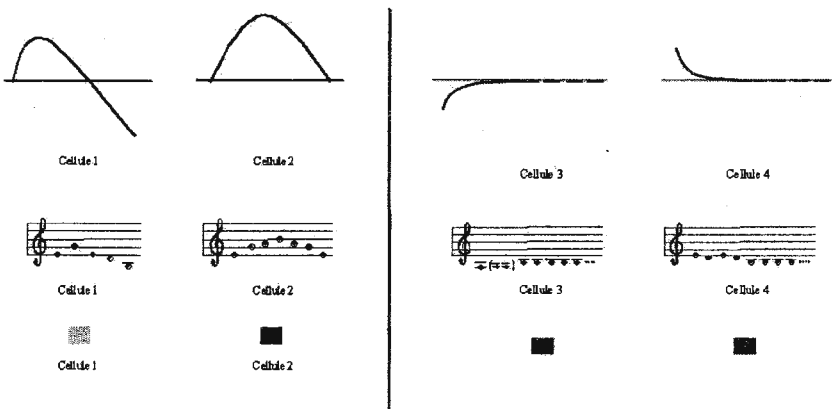
The vocal gesture is not a given, it has to be acquired by observing the breathing techniques of other singers, by selecting the interpretative style that is most appropriate at the level of register, breathing capacity as well as the syllabic delivery of each one.

For instance, a Palawan singer of tales, *mānunultul*, has to experience in his body various breathing capacities, as the basic unit of the composition is a 'breathing group of words' (Revel, 1983, 2000a,b) in contrast to measured and alternatively unmeasured heptasyllabic stanzas as found in a Sama *kata-kata*. He has to adjust his own breathing and vibrating capacities to the 'mental text' that he simultaneously internalizes (Revel, 1993c). He conducts this work alone, most often in silence — the epic sings within himself — and usually sets himself apart from the glances and ears of others. He goes to the forest to be inspired by the aural perception of the sounds of the wind in the canopy of trees as well as a gift, of a Good-Doer-of-the-Forest, *bingäy ät Mänungang Taw ät Gäbaq*, and retires to the field house in order to develop his mastery, in solitude. He gives himself fully to this act of imitation, this *mimèsis*, which is simultaneously an act of appropriation as his memory has captured a story and the melodic cells, *hyäg* 'voice', of the various characters as sung by another before him. However, he will introduce his own



individual style, his 'signature' in various ways. The necessary adjustment between melodic cells, breathing capacity, and mental text invites this variation to take place and this is going to generate variants in text and melody as Usuy exemplified with *Kudaman* (Revel, 1983, 1992). It will reveal the very style of each singer of tales and in this sense we can speak of living memory, 'la mémoire vive'.

For the Sama, in a *kata-kata* performance, the music is fundamental. In this beautiful chanted story, however, the narration takes precedence over the chant; in other words, the music serves the text, in which narrative parts alternate with the dialogues, making up a dramatic action. However music is closely linked to semantics and this is what is deeply interesting to analyze. In this case, Binsu Lakbaw, the singer, has a stock of four melodic cells on which to draw.



Four Melodic Cells

Cells 3 and 4 are assigned to the narration of the actions that lead the plot to its end, thus carrying the narrative.

Cells 1 and 2 are characterized by the amplitude of the melodic movement. They express a sentiment, an emotional atmosphere that the singer of tales wishes to evoke in his listeners, a kind of deep breath that is moving and somehow emphatic.

Breath taken after every 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and sometimes 4<sup>th</sup> verse is closely linked to the meaning of the utterance within the constraint of the given melodic cells making up the stanza, a closed space.

The art of the singer lies in the way the narrative utterances and the rhymed dialogues are made to coincide with the global melodic structure and its components.

Sinama is a six vowel and 17 consonant system with nine geminates in intervocalic position. Stress is on the penultimate syllable.

Melodic cell 3, with its use of *recto-tono*, allows syllabication of the Sinama

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narrative. A regular melodic flow will be observed, based on one note = one syllable, while the lines of verse are mostly heptasyllabic and the last syllable is rhymed. Often an assonance is present, but it is unstable.

Sama Kata-Kata :

*Silungan Baltapa*

175. *Dumaqin alantaq  
amentaw na tendaq  
titiimbangan ma Sulgaq  
alla inaq  
aninkulang magmamaq  
Silungan lella pataq  
toggol ku pinaryataq  
ni anakan eq inaq eq si emmaq  
ni papan penatennaq  
halam dusa aniaq  
uy, uy, uy, uy, - - iq*

The Judgment Ladder in Heaven  
was no longer clear  
looking from a distance.  
Silungan, the handsome one,  
sat cross-legged and chewed a quid.  
He said: "Mother,  
from the time I was born,  
you and my father  
protected me from the outer world,  
I have no sin."

176. *Eq  
Silungan lella pataq  
pariataq ni riataq timbangan  
halam magkulang-kulang  
(hp) tuju ni karandahan  
uy, uy, uy, uy, - - iq.*

Silungan, the handsome one,  
climbed onto the Judgment Scale.  
The balance was exact,  
then it tipped towards Paradise.

177. *Eq  
Pareoq min timbangan  
milanjalan na lenggan na  
o, dumaqin na alantaq  
amantang na tendaq  
lan tullu magsekmaq  
arak maka solekmaq  
ni lan paruambilaq  
o, taqentom na eq na  
papata min emmaq na Auliaq  
ia nasa tabeaq  
o, lan min tengngaq-tengngaq  
na lan sagboi aniaq  
ubus paqen pasuaq  
Silungan lella pataq  
(hp) anampal deom Sulgaq  
uy, uy, uy, uy, - - iq  
anampal deom Sulgaq  
uy, uy, uy, uy, - - iq.*

He descended the scales  
and continued walking.  
It was no longer clear  
looking from a distance.  
There was a path  
branching into three.  
He almost mistakenly took  
the side paths,  
but fortunately he remembered  
his father Aulia's advice  
to follow the middle path,  
the path full of bushes.  
After Silungan, the handsome one,  
passed through the bushes,  
Paradise appeared.

The Ultimate of Heaven appeared!

178.

*Eq*  
*Halam tēndaq-ēndaq*  
*Narqaq amagaq-magaq*  
*Silungan lēlla pataq*  
*tandaq min tengngaq-tengngaq*  
*toggol ku pinamyataq*  
*ni anakan eq inaq eq si ēmmaq*  
*halam dusa aniaq*  
*Silungan lēlla pataq*  
*aningkulang magmamaq*  
*mamibog deom Narqaq*  
*xy, xy, xy, xy, -- iq.*

Nothing could be seen  
 Narqaq, Hell, appeared with red embers  
 Silungan, the handsome one  
 was standing in the middle.  
 "From the time I was born,  
 my mother and father  
 protected me from the outer world.  
 I have no sin."  
 Silungan the handsome one went in, chewed  
 He proceeded away from Hell.

*Stanza 175-178, pp.41-42*

**Silungan baitana**

Soloist © Olivier Tourny

Although the melodic motifs recur, the verse cycles are sometimes irregular passing from seven to nine or 10 feet and irregular number of verses to make a stanza.

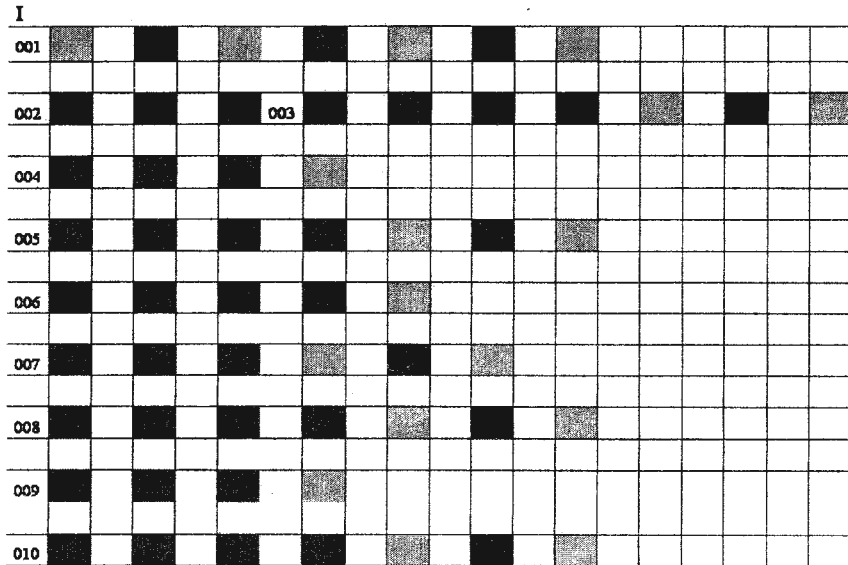
There are different modalities of rhyming: it may be constant as in stanza 002 whose five verses end on the same syllable (aaaaa) or in stanza 003 with seven verses, stanza 005 with eight. Another modality would be the

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alternating rhyme, as in stanza 004 with six rhymed verses (aababa), stanza 006 with nine (aabbccccc), or stanza 007 with five (aabcc).

At the general level of the composition of '*Silungan Baltapa*', we have noticed a contrast between the measured sung delivery of the narrative, a recto-tono, cell 3, and the melismatic unmeasured delivery closing each stanza. This is observed at the melodic level. I propose to go deeper.

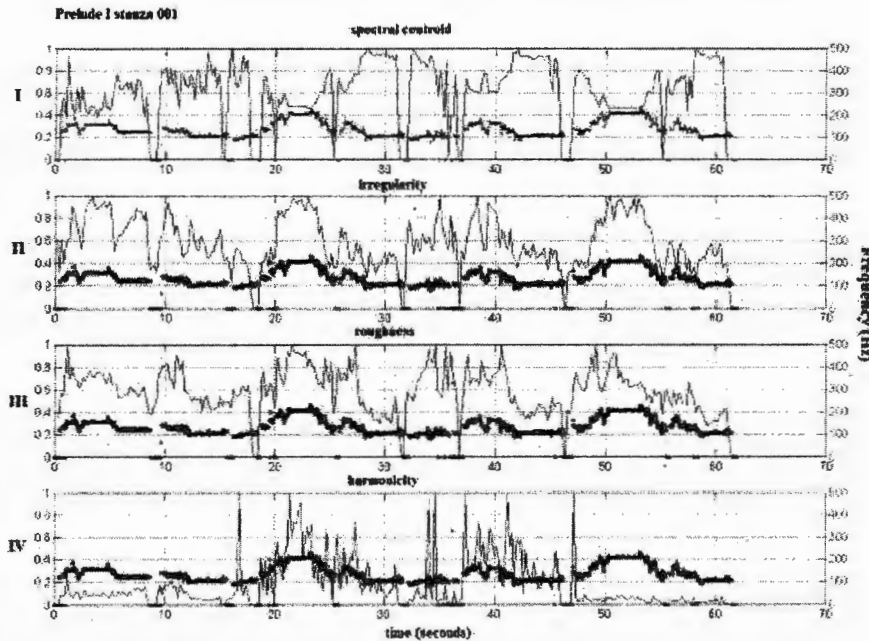
### Melodic system, transcription in intergral



The spectral analysis of timbre corroborates this observation. Linked to the syllabic delivery of the recto-tono, one can observe a timbre contour with fast and sharp variations, while that of the melismatic delivery of the part ending each stanza is soft and undulating (See D. Bolger's graphs, stanza 007 on).

Considering now the prelude, *sambahakan*, to the whole story as well as every reprise, we see that it is characterized by a more melismatic melodic contour, which is corroborated by an undulating timbre contour with a generally higher harmonicity. There is an exception on reprise V (stanzas 192-193), where there is less vocal stability.

Spectral Analysis of Timbre



*Sambahakan I* :Prelude I

001 (hp) *In Kabuy --i--ni Berdu--ri---i*  
*naputus sin ---il--muq---eq*  
 (hp) *amaura in--tagsukuq*  
*iakin ----iban---iluq----*  
*Alla raya---ng---iq*  
 (hp) *Anduq dayang-----ng---iq*

The roughness as well as the irregularity is also consistently high and this reflects the spectral richness of Binsu Lakbaw's voice. The voice is consistently bright in the preludes and in the narrative and more so in the melismatic ending of each stanza which functions as a litany with a recurrent onomatopoeic formula *ny, ny, ny,---iq* suggestive of a blowing sound, a sound of wind.

The 'intimacy' of the links between sound and meaning, not of the word but of the verse and the stanza as a whole, is manifested in the qualities of the vocal timbre of the singer of tales.

Beyond a phonetic symbolism enhanced by Roman Jakobson ('Poetics' in

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*Essays on General Linguistics*, 1963 and *Six Lessons on Sound and Meaning*, 1976) there is a symbolism of the voice, which has a poetic function. This tentative exploration opens new insights into the complexity and subtlety of the bonds between poetry and music in epics as a verbal art.

We have, on the one hand, the manifestation of a skill and, on the other hand, the setting in motion of this knowledge base by reasoning processes, narrative and argumentative schemes, worldviews and cosmogonic values, topologies, and associative webs.

I have already described in *The Teaching of the Ancestors* (Revel, 2001, 2005) the specific procedures and various motor skills of the Palawan singers of tales, their own method to store information in long-term-memory (LTM) and retrieve it in a rapid and unfailing way. The acquisition of encoding methods and retrieval structures is relevant to the verbal art and mastery of the singer-narrator together with a perfect vocal gesture in attacking, in pausing, in sounding and relating a story that is to be achieved simultaneously. This is a multimodal, long lasting creative activity for it can go on for half a night or an entire night.

I have also shown in the past (Revel, 1994, 2000a,b, 2004) how self-reiteration takes place in building up the long-term memory and how a Palawan highlander, by self-repetition of segments uttered together with specific melodic motifs, internalizes and memorizes a long sung narrative. By doing so, he builds up a corpus of narratives and saves them in his memory as mental narratives. As he performs a *tutul* he reactualizes it constantly according to events, circumstances, and personal emotions. Hence we are in the presence of a traditional world, but also of a personal world. And this is particularly clear and manifested in chanting *ulaging* in the Binukit tradition of northern Mindanao with the performance of the *sala* as a lyrical interlude to the long narrative of an episode of 'Great *Agyu*'.

### 5. Formulaic style: Parallelism as a creative tool in Tala-andig Bukidnon *ulaging*

Since the work of Milman Parry on *Homeric Epithets* (1928), we are familiar with the |Noun + Epithet| formula and there is a Rubik's Cube of formulas to play with and fit well in the dactylic hexameter. This mold can generate new formulas.

The process of composition, so highly praised by the Talaandig-Bukidnon in their epic, is based on parallelisms and pairs of synonyms, *sampal*. The *bag-ulaging* has to be a master of description by setting into motion his vast database of synonyms. The performance starts with *pamada*, an invocation to the guardian spirits of the house, of the staircase, of the teeth, of the lips, of the voice. Singing *ulaging* takes place during weddings and after harvest of corn or rice as an entertainment. During the wake for the dead, the song will last for the whole night continuously, without the interlude of a *sala*, a lyrical composition with

philosophical insights. Someone in the audience will take over to let the singer of tales rest and to express a personal feeling, an anguish, to relieve oneself by such an artistic expression. Sometimes the narrator abandons himself in performing the *sala*.

**PAMADA: Tala-andig text**

Hee-----heeay

1 Siginsigin lageng ku.....	sinuku kadisal ku
2 Kadisal pasagmaw ka.....	hu panayaw wed lantipi
3 Lageng pasugipit ka.....	ngipen wed sagiala
4 Aman suyagen ka.....	na man ta sugipiten ka
5 Yan nu paman ampuni.....	sag taladaya ha bantay
6 Diwata ha namintu .....	hu panayaw wed lantipi
7 Na yan paman pamada-i .....	su suguy ha namaiyak
8 Hu ngipen wed sagiala	
9 Na aman ta maampunan.....	na man ta mapamadaan
10 Na yan paman adapi.....	sag taladaya ha bantay
11 Yu tumelaw hu buhuk ku	
12 Na yan paman pamadai.....	sa suguy y ha tagadaya a tumanud
13 Hu du patalwas ki Lubayen	
14 Na man ta maadapan nu.....	na man ta maayeyepan
15 Na yan nu paman adapi .....	sa tumanud inpabantay
16 Hu pasigi ha langkuban	
17 Yan paman pamada-i.....	sa saguy inalintanud
18 Hu dasag ha limbubungan	
19 Na iman ta maadapan nu.....	na man ta maayeyepan
20 Na yan nu paman adapan.....	su Sinyuda ha Kahibunan
21 Ay Bai Kadawayaan	
22 Iyan nu ag ampunan.....	su Diwata ha Sumilib
23 Ay suguy ya Manuliman	
24 Aw aman ta maampunan.....	na man ta mapamadaan
25 su suguy ha Tinglaluyan.....	
26 Daw ikaduwag ampunan.....	su Diwata Sadayan
27 Su suguy ya Kulatayan	
28 Na daludu ki Tekdawan	iling ki Tuyadegan

**Transcription according to the declamatory style, *mantukaw***

**REVEL**

***PAMADA* Opening invocation**

Hee-----heeay

- 1 Oh my beloved voice ..... my very precious sound
- 2 my voice please filter..... through the unfiled teeth
  
- 3 My voice come pass through..... the unlevelled teeth
- 4 As soon as you come out..... when you come through
  
- 5 Then you shall pay courtesy..... to the aligned guardians
- 6 to the Diwata that dwells ..... on the unfiled teeth
  
- 7 Then you shall give greetings..... to the guardian living
- 8 onto the unlevelled teeth.
  
- 9 Once your greetings are expressed..... once your courtesy is paid
  
- 10 Then you shall render greetings..... to the aligned guardians
- 11 of the tip of my hair
  
- 12 Then you shall pay courtesy ..... to the lining up guardian spirits
- 13 of the very tip of my hair
  
- 14 When your courtesy is expressed..... when your greetings are offered
  
- 15 You shall present your respects ..... to the guardians who secured
- 16 the clipped ridge of the roof
  
- 17 Then you pay courtesy ..... to the guardians who keep
- 18 the fastened ridge of the roof
  
- 19 And once your greetings are expressed..... and your respects are presented
  
- 20 Then you shall present your regards..... to the Lady-keeping-the-Assembly
- 21 The Lady-Keeping-the-Gathering
  
- 22 Then you give greetings..... to the Listening-Diwata
- 23 The Hearing- God
  
- 24 And once your greetings are given ..... once your respects are rendered
  
- 25 Then you shall pay respect ..... to Diwata-Guarding-the-Stairs
- 26 The guardian-of-the-Staircase
  
- 27 Then you shall present your regards ..... to Diwata-Keeping-the-Stair-Railing
- 28 The Deity Securing- the-Stair-Guide

**English Translation of the opening song in declamatory style, *mantukaw***



Graph of the Poetic Composition

PAMADA Opening invocation

Hee-----heeay

- 1 Oh my beloved voice ..... my very precious sound
- 2 my voice please filter..... through the unfiled teeth
- 3 My voice come pass through..... the unlevelled teeth
- 4 As soon as you come out..... when you come through
- 5 Then you shall pay courtesy..... to the aligned guardians
- 6 to the Diwata that dwells..... on the unfiled teeth
- 7 Then you shall give greetings..... to the guardian living
- 8 onto the unlevelled teeth.
- 9 Once your greetings are expressed..... once your courtesy is paid
- 10 Then you shall render greetings..... to the aligned guardians
- 11 of the tip of my hair
- 12 Then you shall pay courtesy .....to the lining up guardian spirits
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- 14 When your courtesy is expressed..... when your greetings are offered
- 15 You shall present your respects .....to the guardians who secured
- 16 the clipped ridge of the roof
- 17 Then you pay courtesy .....to the guardians who keep
- 18 the fastened ridge of the roof
- 19 And once your greetings are expressed..... and your respects are presented
- 20 Then you shall present your regards..... to the Lady-keeping-the-Assembly
- 21 The Lady-Keeping-the-Gathering
- 22 Then you give greetings..... to the Listening-Diwata
- 23 The Hearing- God
- 24 And once your greetings are given..... once your respects are rendered
- 25 Then you shall pay respect ..... to Diwata-Guarding-the-Stairs
- 26 The guardian-of-the-Staircase
- 27 Then you shall present your regards ..... to Diwata-Keeping-the-Stair-Railing
- 28 The Deity Securing- the-Stair-Guide

English Translation of the opening song in declamatory style. mantukaw

▬ Pairs

| Parallelsms

↔ Chiasmus

## REVEL

The mirror-like presentation is showing the intricacy of parallel constructions and crisscrossed synonyms in proximate or distant pairs. The mastery and constant exploration of several levels of intricate parallelisms therefore challenges the composer and his listeners.

Here the narrative projected on paper has to capture a stream of utterances linked to the singer of tales' sung delivery and reflecting his mastery of wordplay with synonyms in two, three, and sometimes four parallel successive or delayed formulas. This parallelism might be crisscrossing synonyms in proximate or distant pairs, might be a balancing construction and/or the combination of both.

The sung narrative is by no means a frozen, memorized text that one has to reiterate strictly. Performance is the privileged moment in which the singer of tales sets his creativity and lexical wealth into motion within the constraints of a metrical composition.

The way the song runs together with the text totally disrupts the semantic content of the words, phrases, and sentences, in other words, disrupts the morphology, the syntax, and the lexicon. That is why it is necessary to shift to the *mantukaw* speech delivery, the declamatory style, to bring to the surface the verses and the hemistisch break.

The sung delivery is intense, loud, and hard to sustain for long hours but here the text is prevalent over the voice, and words, breathing, and melodies are disconnected. The singer is also free to interrupt his delivery at any time in order to take a short breath, in fact, the singing technique consists of four moments in less than a one minute span making up a stanza (Revel, 2003).

The first moment is vocalic with a strong, tense attack. The second is a recto-tono at the very junction between uttering and singing, I mean to say, a syllabic uttering of the text on a constant pitch, in this case, on the finalis or the point of reference of the scale. The third moment is an optional one and is characterized by an accelerated speech delivery, while the fourth instant is silence, the end of breathing followed by a new intake of air.

These four moments make up the vocal composition of a stanza that develops into a cycle and is repeated all night long. Considering the length of one episode of the cycle of *Agyu*, this vocal technique is productive and has to be mastered. By doing so the singer of tales conducts his own sung delivery and simultaneously keeps his audience intellectually alert, in a way, he takes care of his own voice in order to keep his listeners' interest. There is a genuine inclination for them in following the usage of this vocal technique carefully in order to take pleasure in detecting the patterns of the compositional structure through the many disruptions of the vocal effects. This is the way, in Binukid, the singer of tales maintains a specific state of communication for an entire night. Empathy and sharp intellectual attitude have to prevail between the singer of tales and his listeners.

A very different kind of macro-parallel construction and distant balance is

found in the Ifugao *hudbud* we have worked on with Patricia Afable and this parallel description and actions of the heroine *Bugan* (Stanzas 17-40) and her brother *Dulnuan* (Stanzas 176-191) have a semiotic and sociological function.

## 6. Formulaic style: a lexicometric approach and its efficacy on a Palawan *tultul*

I started to implement lexicometry in 1999 with the program Lexicloud, then Lexico3, on a Palawan *tultul* 'Mäminbin'.

Palawan is a four-vowel and 16-consonant phonological system. Stress is not contrastive. The text was converted into ASCII and I configured a segmentation grid. In the published book *The Quest for a Wife* (2000b), I came out with:

- a brief lexicometric study of the hierarchical frequencies of the fillers of the voice as enunciative particles with phatic and stylistic values in the sung narrative: *atin* (633), *gasi* (359), *kunuq* (353), *batän* (183), *täyän* (191), *banar* (67). These words are monolexemes, are not lacking in meaning, and are evidence of precise grammatical categories but in this sung verbal art their function shifts and their semantic values differ.

- a lexicometric treatment of interrelating formulas on three major paradigms, which show how the narrative activity works in its dynamics:

- pivotal words linked to perlocution towards the audience
- comparisons which are more discursive but manifest a formulaic style: *tiban ät*, 'like...' (94 instances), *sama ät* 'similar to...' (four instances), a total frequency of 98 instances is present in the whole narrative, hence comparison has a formulaic value while metaphors, *sindir*, are not used in *tultul*, in contrast to *karang*, lyrical compositions in heptasyllabic verse (Revel, 1992)
- pivotal word expressing politeness: *ingasiq*, 'pity', *mämaqan*, 'to chew sharing a quid', and *mägakdjari*, 'if it is possible'.

The analysis of frequency of words was completed with a program of repetitive segments and a program of concordances. Few central words and their functional co-occurring phrases on the theme of politeness and respectful sympathy to others reveal a paradigm with a higher frequency of 45 instances of which 32 are followed to the right of nominative personal modality in the first person, followed by a personal benefactive modality in the second person singular or plural. Nine are followed on the right by a form of address to a stranger, a friend, or a family member. In their verbal exchanges, aggressor and victim call each other *mayaq*, 'friend'. Here is a distribution of actants experiencing a sentiment of compassion, pity, or sympathy from the speaker, thanks to the singer of tales' mediation. This relationship between the 'I' and the 'You' after *ingasiq* clearly manifests an ethos where the three values, namely, *bagi* 'egalitarian sharing', *tabang* 'generous helping one to another', and *ingasiq* 'compassion' predominate and are expressed.

## REVEL

In 2000, I started the analysis of specificities as they explain the relative weight of the various forms of discourse in a closed corpus. Then the specificity of discourse of each protagonist is relative to all the others. We have a partition of the text in eight, as there are eight actors and their respective styles. The Hero has two speech styles (P2 and P3).

Then three main contrasting axes emerge. These axes locate the speakers within the frequency of specific words of vocabulary that they use. One can observe overuse (+), under use (-), and normal use (0) of words.

Axis 1: is the main axis and reveals a first contrast at two levels of registers in vocabulary to operate on the horizontality of the graphs.

The social space of the singer as narrator and three main protagonists / the middle space of two supernatural beings:

P1, P2&P3, P4, P5 / P7, P8

Narrator, Mämim1&2 Labit, Labit's sister / Thunder Balud

P6, the Lady of Fishes is located at point 0 and is not part of this contrast.

The first is a world of dialog : calm / loss of temper,  
of level headedness / violent attitudes and actions,  
of doing good / wrong-doing.

A space where the 'I' (*aku, ku*) prevails, where individualities affirm themselves in order to build up the plot.

On the other hand, the middle space, the space of the seven Nutmeg Pigeons and the seven Brothers Thunder, is characterized by plurality, the 'We' (*syu; kay*) of seven prevails, negative injunctions and prohibitions (with the modalities: *kas, kasiq, diki*) by helpers who are benevolent, magical beings, gifted with clairvoyance and wisdom.

Axis 2: complements Axis 1 and takes care of the 'left-over' of Axis 1. It operates on the verticality of the graph. It reveals a second level of contrast, namely:

P1 P8 / P2 & P3 P4

Narrator 7 Balud / Mämiminbin Labit

The first set is made up of two protagonists, always distant, not directly concerned nor involved. They have a narrative style that sets the story in perspective and use the perlocutory style towards the audience. The other set is made up of two protagonists, two men very involved in the plot, for they are

suddenly confronted with a potential alliance of marriage.

Mäm.P2 is daring, audacious, violent / Labit is calm, courteous, surprised by the sudden offer made to him. In the last part of the epic the singer of tales vanishes away, Balud remain a symbol of union, and Mäm.P3 who is from now on appeased, reasonable, with the required seemliness to gain a wife and Labit is confronted by the possibility of an alliance of marriage. A symmetric exchange between two men is settled as he accepts the woman, the fictive sister I of Mämiminbin that comes to him in reciprocity. As the story comes to a close the two strangers become brothers-in-law. In other words, Axis 2 reveals the action between protagonists and the core of the plot, namely: a symmetrical alliance of marriage.

Axis 3: acts in depth in relation to the levels of Axis 1 and Axis 2. It is relevant to another dimension as it contrasts:

P7	P2	P4	/	P5	P6
Thunder	Mäm1	Labit	/	Labit's sister	Lady of Fishes

A clear contrast in vocabulary appears between male and female protagonist *liwan* / *säläd*, 'outside' / 'inside': Men are always moving, traveling, changing worlds, while women have to stay home, in an interior space, a domestic place with specific objects (*artaq* 'object'; *badyuq* 'dress'; *sälapaq* 'betel quid box'). Then the vocabulary of confrontation, suspicion, violence, healing contrasts with the vocabulary of parity, harmony, alliance of marriage between affines.

A question then arises: Could memorization processes and frequencies be linked?

One can see that an isolated word, non-valorized word, will not be memorized, while repetitive segments, co-occurrences or sequences of joint words, will be memorized. In other words, would the singer of tales memorize by blocks? A frequency of words goes with connections, clusters of words that are coagulate and these generate habits of words, blocks and rhythms. One can analyze an epic by a statistical analysis based on repetition, its absence or its modulation. Statistics pinpoints problems of discursive strategies that have to be analyzed within the images, within rhetoric and stylistics. It does not provide an answer but clearly opens the matter and provides indices that have to be interpreted. I foresee a highly productive application of the lexicometric analysis in the formulaic styles of Ifugao *Hudbud* singing and we have started to apprehend the formulas in space, time, kinship, as well as people categories in *Bugan an Imbayagda*, 'Bugan the Rejected Child'. But the real implementation of the program needs a finalized transcription of the text before its conversion to ASCII. I can foresee a highly productive lexicometric analysis too for the Sama *kata-kata* that just came out *Silungan Baltapa* (2005) and on which I am going to work.

## 7. Deixis and its structuring power on the narrative

In a strict oral situation, for the singer of tales, the points of reference in time and space are the voyages and the ordeals of the heroic characters, their helpers and opponents, and we shall see how the plot is a mediation between the many successive incidents and a unified story.

First, let me focus on the temporality of the narrative and I refer here to P. Ricoeur, to understand the process of 'emplotment' (1985). It consists of 'a relevant succession, a series of incidents and a temporal aspect characterized by the integration, culmination and closure so that the story receives a particular configuration'. So composing a story is from the temporal angle, 'drawing a configuration out of a succession' (P. Ricoeur, 1977, in Word, 1991, *Life in Quest of Narrative*).

Each action, each event has to be part of a chain of temporal sequences with a rigorous and necessary causal relationship. The thread of causality is a major organizational principle of the mental view of the story. Ricoeur observes: 'One can detect a competition between succession and configuration. However concordance is prior to discordance' (1977) and 'configuration' has to prevail. In this respect, one can represent a story as a network of causal relationships, as the performer and the listeners work to infer a link between two events. This is a problem relevant to 'text processing'.

With *Silungan Baltapa*, in the sequence of 216 stanzas, Binsu Lakbaw, the singer of tales, alone introduces the plot, develops it, and brings it to a close. In *Kudaman* and *Mämimibin*, Usuy and Mäsinu respectively do the same. As a matter of fact the narrative is the 're-presentation of people in action' and we have to detect what the immediate constituents of the 'sentence of action' are (Molino & Lefhail, 2003).

In every story we deal with a 'textual deixis' which borrows from spatial and temporal deixis at a meta-textual level, and I will show the structuring power of space for constructing the narrative. In this respect, I have to emphasize the importance of *topoi*, I mean to say, the voyages; the trajectory of the hero and/or the heroic couple, as complex as it might be, can be topographically represented.

I propose to draw a map in three dimensions of the actions of the various protagonists building up the plot in an attempt to capture the inner vision of the one singing, the 'mental map' that governs his delivery. In a chain of oral-aural transmission, this cognitive map builds up in the listeners' active thinking and memory as the ephemeral, privileged moment of internalizing the plot takes place.

Beyond the linear delivery of the story, there is topological thinking. Palawan highlanders speak of the 'paths', *dalan*, and they are, in a way, aware that there is a structural centrality and a causal connectivity with multiple retrieval routes, as many links connect the components of a story.

Re-presenting the story by a graph is in fact re-presenting a network of causal relationships and is related to ‘text processing’ in a situation without written support. Within a given culture, singers of tales and listeners move in a closed system at the intersection of several sets, social institutions, system of attitudes, moral code, customary law, cosmogony, ritual practices, verbal and musical art, a world as lived in, ‘un monde habité’, the importance of which Lévi-Strauss has revealed to us in the structural analysis of myths. The epic projects this manner of living in the world in the mode of fiction and a confrontation will emerge between the world of the narrative and the world of the listener. The world of the text also confronts us with the ‘fictive experience of time’, the importance of which Ricoeur has emphasized and deeply analyzed.

The idea of drawing graphs came to me while working with Lourdes Dulawan on two Ifugao *budbud*, namely: *Aliguyon nak Amtalao* and *Bugan nak Panga’iwan*. Ifugao is a five-vowel and 14-consonant system plus one long mark. We follow the systematic orthography based on phonological contrasts established by H. C. Conklin. (1991, 2004). In this case, the narrative is split in two parts: the plot, the narrative thread, is exclusively sung by a leading voice *munba’we*, with a very restricted melodic curve and paying no attention to metric in order to deliver her utterances. However, the leading voice brings her utterances to a close with a constant melodic formula that becomes measured, paving the way for the chorus to come in. The names of protagonist(s) and his/their kinship relationship(s), his/their location and motion in space (villages’ center, rice fields, hills, rivers and forests) and time of the day (morning sun, midday sun, setting sun, and dusk) are constantly activated by the chorus, *munbudbud*, as the performance functions by periodic cycles. ‘Spatial deixis’ and ‘temporal deixis’ are used as landmarks by the chorus whose function is to locate the actions and motions of the topic characters within a given territorial space that is vast and delimited. The chorus as a community sings the interrelationship.

*Ifugao Hudhud* singing: the leading voice and the chorus

IFUGAO  
BUGAN NAK PANGATWAN

Melodic patterns

Soloist:

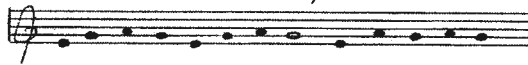


Choir:

1)



2)



However, the chorus is not in strict unison. It is rather a plurivocal monody. There is some kind of an inner clock to the group as the chorus follows a measure. There is a ‘tuilage’ of the soloist over the chorus, not the reverse, and this is the mark of the solo leading voice with her prevailing narrative thread over the deixis. In this monody, the chorus actualizes actions and paths of motion within the space and time of the narrative (Revel & Tourny, 2003). This orientation process is a dynamic one, giving information to the audience while the leading voice is then free to think of the next step in action, the next motion to be sung and overlaps without considering the metric nor the measure that the chorus tries to maintain. As the performance functions by flexible periodic cycles, it rests on two melodic ideas, two prototypical melodic formulas on which some variations may appear.



IFUGAO  
BUGAN NAK PANGATWAN

Melodic structure:

Soloist	Choir
---------	-------

I

1	<i>Dangunay yana, 'a. ya, 'o 'an inPanga'awan 'o.. e</i>
2	Iboykat mi dan banhan hi Bu <i>gan 'aki Bugan nana, ngadana, 'o 'an Panga'awan.</i>

II

3	Ya hapiton Indangunay <i>Dangunay yana, 'a. ya, 'o 'an inPanga'awan 'o.. e</i>
4	Ne'ugge nunmatak nunmaddikit hi Bu <i>gan 'aki Bugan nana, ngadana, 'o 'an Panga'awan.</i>

III

5	Iyap'ap'aptuwan yun 'a'am <i>Dangunay yana, 'a. ya, 'o 'an inPanga'awan 'o.. e</i>
6	Abunadi pal'awan dat mun'igguyud da boh 'imbulagda 'ot na boh kawad'an <i>tuh kagawwan tuh gawwana ya gawwanadna, 'e 'ad Gonhadan.</i>

IV

7	An han 'e nen nawa'way <i>kubbunhanda bigbigatdah gawanna, 'o. ya, e 'ad Gonhadan, nema 'o.. e</i>
8	An 'inhawang bon di 'a'am <i>mod 'an bulalakkin wadab giligna 'oya giddena, bi 'ad Gonhadan;</i>

i.e.

Soloist	Choir	Soloist	Choir
---------	-------	---------	-------

In an Ifugao *huhud* performance and related transcribed text, this split in singing and the necessary complement between the soloist woman leading the plot and the accompanying women's voices singing the temporal and spatial deixis, is very functional and reveals clearly the part of a 'mental text' and the part of a 'mental map', their interplay and necessary complement as the plot is woven between two villages Gonhadan and Luminggaling and two places of abandonment and re-encounter for the heroic characters in the forest. The plot unfolds among five places in 10 action-events.

The aesthetic device and emphasis on textual deixis described above could, I think, resonate as the Ifugao major interest in and concern for 'Territory'.

In other cultural traditions, as among the Palawan or the Sama, the two, mental text and mental map, are merged as a single voice sings the whole epic with a feedback, *tubag*, of the audience. Among the Palawan, *tubag* is either the repetition in unison of the name of the hero as in the Lowlands of the Punang area, or in the highlands' culture, some comments and exclamations of wonder, compassion, and empathy for the protagonists as the story unfolds.

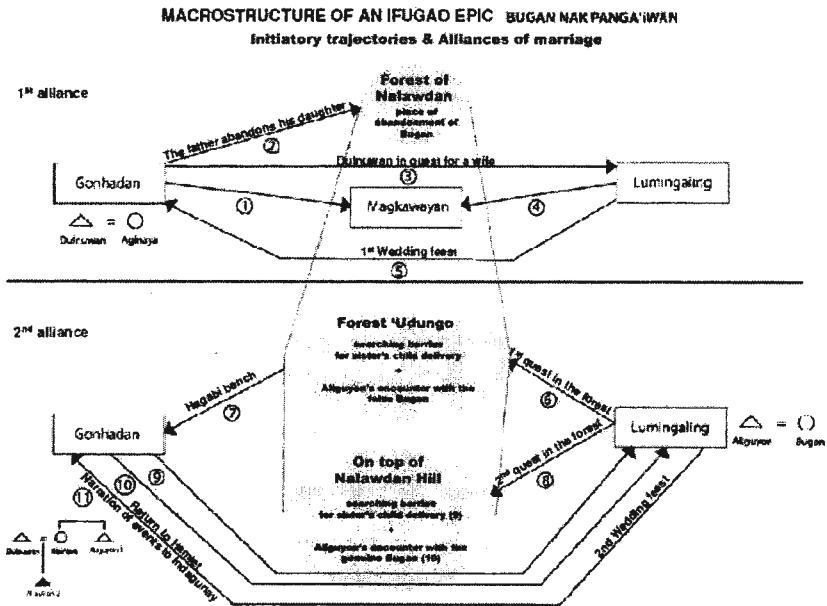
# REVEL

Space in the narrative sequence is a principle according to which the singer of tales structures his 'mental text' (Revel, 1996). Such a synoptic view of the plot is simultaneously analysis and synthesis. This is a mental scheme implicit in the singer's thinking process as he performs the narrative. Thus, I perceive the charted space as a 'pre-textual frame' that imparts a pattern to the narrative and the linearity of events turns into the 'configuration' of a plot (Ricoeur, 1985, pp. 113-120).

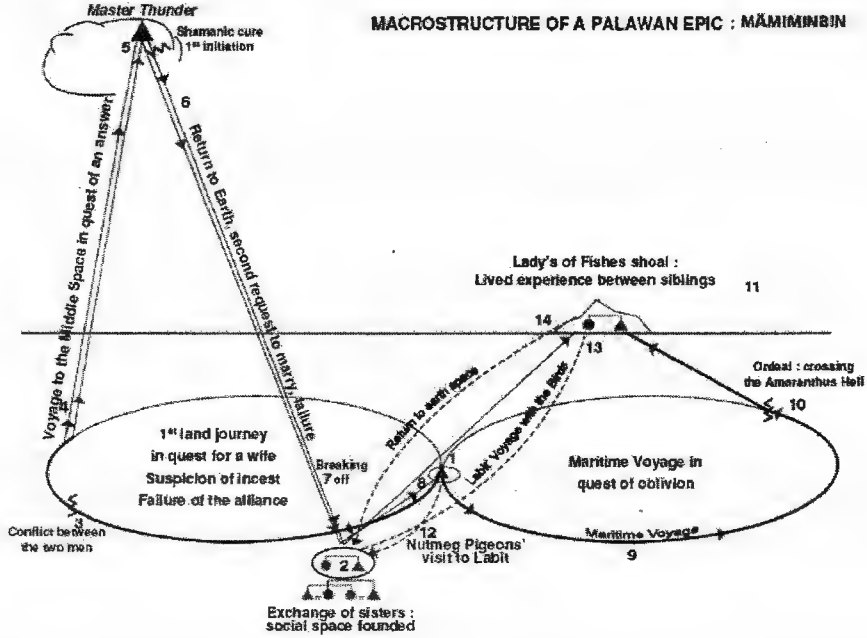
## Plot and Textual Deixis:

A constant interplay between a mental text and a mental map:

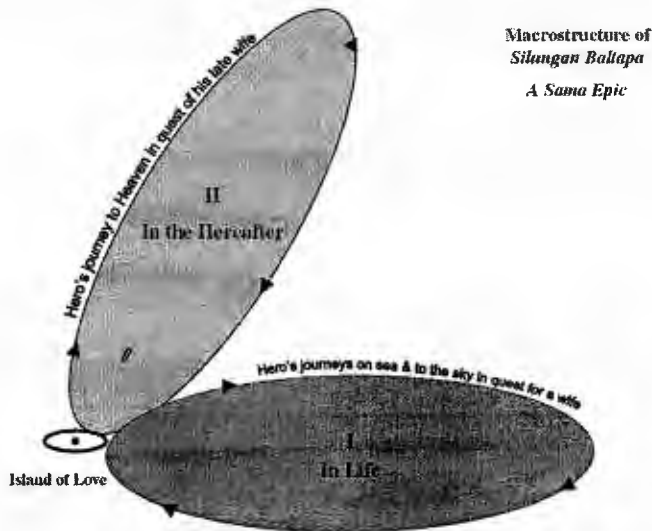
Arrows, numerals and colors in the graphs identify the actions and motions in space and time of each protagonist and reveal the structuring power of space within the time of a fiction.



The graphs represent the macro-structure or the respective pre-textual frame of the respective narrative of a Palawan *tutul*: *Mämimimbin*.

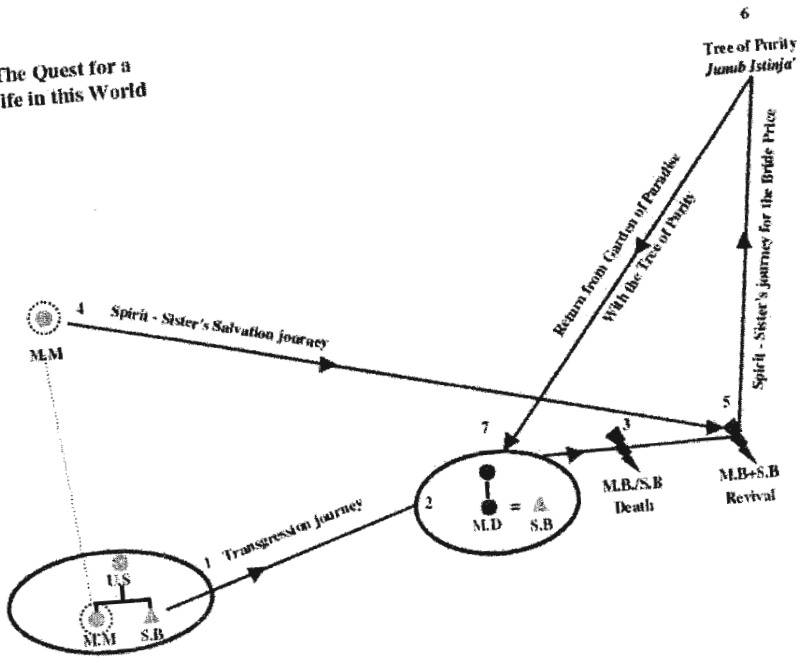


This is followed by a Sama *kata-kata: Silungan Baltapa*.

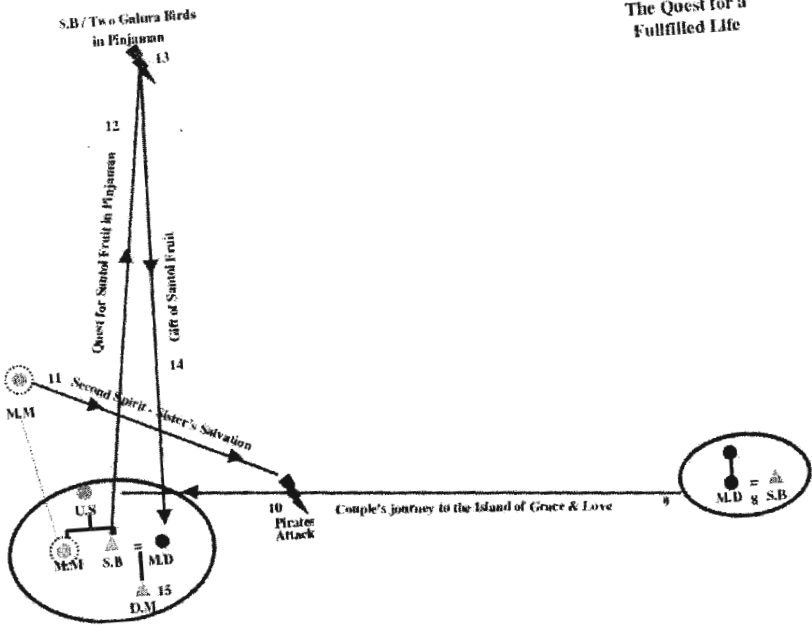


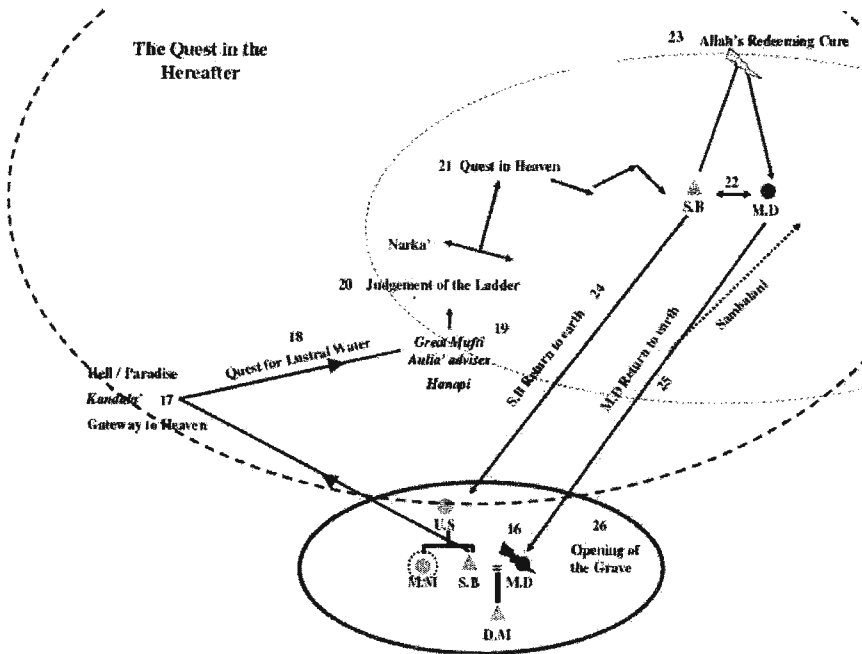
REVEL

The Quest for a Wife in this World



The Quest for a Fulfilled Life





### 8. 'Mimèsis of action' and memory

Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, noticed that the time-space of the fiction is a *mimèsis* of the time-space of the reality as experienced by the very people themselves.

Listeners follow and internalize these long narratives as they configure a fictive reality that is similar to the natural, social, and cosmogonic space surrounding them. We are in the presence of a genuine '*mimèsis of action*' and I would add, this evocation of a given world and of a 'stream of life' has a 'ring of truth' that probably helps the singer of tales to internalize the story and retain it. In a ludic and poetic manner an oral epic tradition represents not only an intangible heritage of great beauty, but it is the repository of customs that re-actualizes on the narrative mode and revives in a fictive way, the life and the system of values and customs of each cultural group.

Within the Palawan corpus of 13 epics that I have been gathering through the years, I noticed that we are in the very presence of an anthology of alliances of marriage and the various cases related to it according to 'Customary law', *Adat*.

For the Ifugao, in northern Luzon, a very different society, the affinity rules are similar to those of the Palawan as the ideal alliance of marriage is also a symmetric exchange of their respective sisters between two men but of the same wealthy status, the *Kadangyan*. In order to maintain parity in these two different

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societies, one equalitarian and the other stratified but observing parity, this affinity rule prevails and is highly valorized and constantly illustrated by their respective long chanted narrative repertoires.

Beyond the knowledge base that each singer of tales possesses in his trained memory and that he presents to his audience as he performs, the listeners themselves can take turns to enter into the creative game because they are stimulated at the level of reasoning and composing. The wealth of oral traditions rests upon infinite combinations, the virtual result between mnemonic devices and customary stories. Within the knowledge base of a given culture, an ancestral repertoire together with a dynamic intelligence and a creative potential are always at work. As it is sung, an epic is expanding on the side of the singer of tales as well as on that of his listeners, 'ces interprètes silencieux', these silent performers as Lévi-Strauss qualified them.

As the song is received, I mean to say perceived and comprehended, new 'interpretants' are emerging. In order to reveal the dynamics of the emission, comprehension, and transmission of an epic, I have already proposed to extend the notion of 'interpretant' as defined by C. Sanders Pierce (Revel, 2000b, pp. 363-364).

One can then understand more deeply the cognitive activity of the listeners as receiving subjects who are moved, but also constructing themselves, who are memorizing and interiorizing the plot. Configuration conveys a coherence much needed for the memorization as it reinforces the various mnemonic devices formerly mentioned, namely:

- repetitive segments in sound and images,
- sound icons and visual icons characteristic of the 'formulaic style' as defined by A. B. Lord;
- the 'epic moments' revealed by A. Hatto, as well as 'rhetorical moments' of C.H. Breteau, P. Galland-Pernet and M. Galley.
- material motives and social motives as explored by W. Heissig in the Mongol epics.

Some day, one of the listeners will take over and will compose in performance after working in solitude or under the close guidance of another singer of tales. As an aspiring singer of tales emerges, then a slow and secret 'rumination' starts within himself. I like this physiological metaphor for it suggests the embodiment of the sung narrative.

The training itself is a compositional process, a gathering process, and a recalling process. The result, however, is new knowledge, the product of a dilatation. Carruthers (1990) qualifies this traditional act of composition as a 'memorative composition' and this is done mentally and by muttering or chewing the words. In the Middle Ages, this substance of the composition needed many adjustments and reshapings, some kind of oral 'multiple draft', as I mentioned before (Revel, 1993a), a notion I borrowed from D. Dennett and adapted to oral epic chanting. This was called the *res* (Carruthers, 2003, p. 285).

In my analysis of oral compositions, the graph I propose, this mental product of a compositional process, this pattern of composition, would be the *res*.

In literature of voice, composing is not an act of writing, 'it is a rumination, a *cogitatio*, a listening to and a dialogue with, a gathering of voices arising from their various places of memory'. Within a culture X or Y and its knowledge base there is a dynamic intelligence, a creative potential, indeed an ancestral repertoire which is, as the song is performed, always expanding on the side of the poet-musician who is the performer on that very night as well as on the side of his listeners, the performers to be.

At this point the system opens, composition within Tradition is set in motion and, in this respect, it would not be mistaken to consider the singing of epics as a vocal 'skilled activity' (un système expert), like playing chess or playing the piano.

Certainly, the symbolic function and the teaching of these narratives is expected, but the pleasure, the emotion, and 'la fonction réalisante de la Poésie' are the gifts of a night listening to this ephemeral verbal art.

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