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Siblaw Taraw and Other Stories: Ifiallig Orature and Worldview

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シブラウ・タラウとその他の物語：イフィアッリグの口承文学と世界観

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要約：

本論文は、マウンテン・プロビンスのバルリグの口承文学と、彼らの神話に見られるイフィアッリグの世界観の分析である。イフィアッリグはフィリピン北部、マウンテン・プロビンスの南東に位置する町に居住している。イフィアッリグは彼らの言語をフィナッリグと呼んでおり、豊かな口承遺産を持っている。彼らは物語や、彼らがウブ・ウフォクと呼んでいるものを聞くことを楽しむ民族である。イフィアッリグにとって、これらの物語は単なる話ではない。何百年にも渡って世代から世代に受け継がれてきたため、ウブ・ウフォクは彼らの歴史、系図、文化的な伝統の記録として役立っているのである。

Introduction

Myths are an important aspect of a people's culture. Through myths, we can get a glimpse of how a certain community views their world. This paper analyzes the orature of Barlig, Mountain Province and the worldview of the Ifiallig as reflected in their myths.

The Ifiallig reside in a municipality located southeast of Mountain Province in northern Philippines [see Figure 1].[1] Barlig has a total land area of 34,326.69 hectares of steep mountainous terrain.

The Ifiallig refer to their language as Finallig[2] and they have a rich oral heritage. They are a people who enjoy listening to stories or *ub-ufok* as they call them. In the old days, these story-telling sessions usually occur at night when the elders or *umu-ufok* have the leisure to think and recall ancient magical tales. They sit around the bonfire of the *ator* or council-house and revel in the glory of their hero-ancestors like Linmipaw and Amfusnun. For the Ifiallig, these stories are not just tales. Handed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years, the *ub-ufok* serve as a record of their history, genealogy and cultural traditions.

In order to retrieve these ancient tales, I travelled to Barlig with my dear friend and persistent guide Jef Cawaon Cablog. An Ifiallig and a professional artist, Jef shared my interest in these

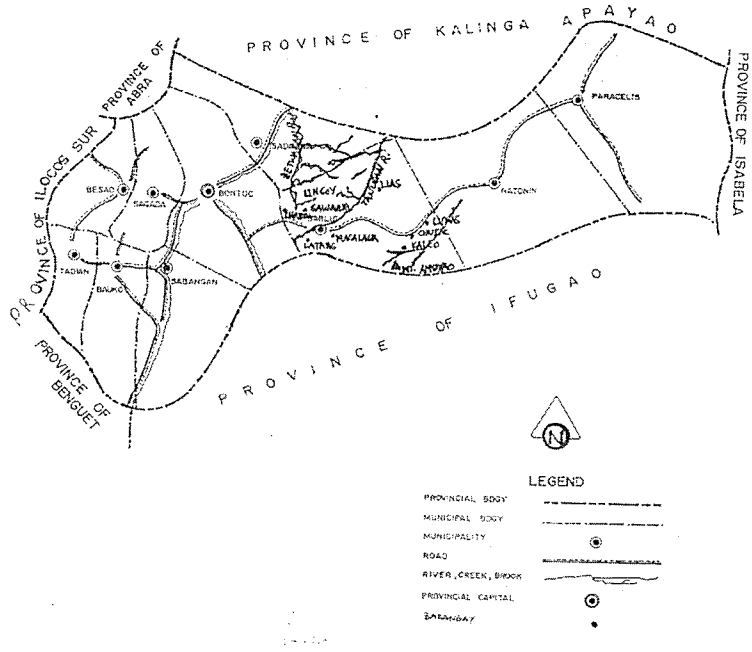


Fig. 1. Location of the Municipality of Barlig, Mountain Province.

stories. Jef recorded the tales of Arfonso Nacleo, Mateo Fiangaan, Pedro Padiangan and Jerzon Ayongchi, revered *umu-ufok* of their community. I am greatly indebted to them for sharing their knowledge with us. Abigail Matib, my research associate, was also one of the kindred spirits who made this research possible. Abigail transcribed the tapes from Finallig and helped me to translate them into Filipino. These stories form the subject of this paper.

The Significance of Myth

> In the not-so-distant past, in provincial cities and towns, in fishing villages and mountain hamlets, there always was an audience eager to hear tales and glean lessons from them. Through such narratives were our ancestors' values transmitted down to us.[3]

With these words, E. Arsenio Manuel highlights the importance of Philippine orature (a term coined to posit the cultural totality expressed though an oral culture or 'oral literature'). Orature provides us with insights on a people's beliefs and lifeways.

> Folklore includes society's entire range of popular knowledge and wisdom reflective of their social relationships, ideas, customs, habits, values, beliefs, ideals and aspirations.[4]

As such, folklore is crucial to people's lives, and it is a key to understanding a people's culture and worldview. Ojibway writer and storyteller Basil Johnston expresses the significance of narratives as follows:

> If the Native Peoples and their heritage are to be understood, it is their beliefs, insights, concepts, ideals, values, attitudes, and codes that must be studied. And there is... no better way of gaining understanding than by examining native ceremonies, rituals, songs, dances, prayers, and stories. For it is in [these oral narratives] that the sum total of what people believe about life, being, existence, and relationships is symbolically expressed and articulated; as it is in story... that fundamental insights and attitudes toward life, human conduct and character... are embodied and passed on.[5]

Moreover, Teresita Obusan says,

> Long before the advent of mass media, our [forebears] transmitted knowledge through *kuwento* [story]. This role was considered of such importance, that in early Bicol culture, it was the leader who was entrusted with this role. Today, our mass media has taken over this role... Lost were not only the *kuwento* but also something much more precious. For embedded within the *kuwento* was the knowledge and wisdom of a people that has been culled from generations... The use of *kuwento* and other forms of popular expression are attempts to use the very tools by which the *tao* [*person*] transmits information.[6]

The *kuwento* gives valuable insights into the person's world. *Kuwento* is so important that only the leaders recount these narratives. For the Ifiallig, only the *umu-ufok*, in their role as wisdom-bearers and keepers of tradition, recite the *ub-ufok* in order to remind the community of the essence of community life. By the fires of the ator, story-telling usually occurs at night when the *umu-ufok* have the leisure to think and recall narratives, and the community is done with the work in the field. Story, indeed, brings the community together, and binds them to a common memory.

Ub-ufok functions as a reflection of the community's folkways. These tales are understood and perceived differently by the community (*taga-loob*) and by outsiders (*taga-labas*). E. Arsenio Manuel states

> The characters [of these tales] were not ordinary... but superhuman... The setting was the world of the remote past... Though such tales may seem like fantasies to the outsider, they are taken to be factual by members of the community. Indeed they are

sacred stories about sacred events... These myths have been dramatized through rituals.[7]

From the Greek *mythos, myth* means *story* or *word*. The classic folkloristic definition of myth has been provided by William Bascom in his article, "The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives."

> Myths are defined as tales believed as true, usually sacred, set in the distant past or other worlds or parts of the world, and with extra-human, inhuman, or heroic characters. Such myths, often described as "cosmogenic" or "origin" myths, function to provide order or cosmology... Cosmology's concern with the order of the universe finds narrative, symbolic expression in myths, which thus often help establish important values or aspects of a culture's worldview.[8]

Myths are believed to be magical. The ethnic groups from the northern part of the Philippines — the Ifugao, Kankanaey and Nabaloi — all share this belief. The Ifugaos, for example, believe that the myths are not distinguishable from the "spirit world" and the "real world," that myths reflect a meshed form of the past events and present ones.[9] The Ifugaos continually shift from present to past as the myths are being used in rituals. On some occasions, the past and present are conjoined in the story.

> Myths are incidents which "happened" when the world had not yet been created and humans had not taken control of their material possessions, arts and culture. Ifugao myths concern hero-ancestors, gods, and other supernatural beings that solved problems like those of the modern Ifugao. Myths are in the past tense but the nature of the myths is historical present.[10]

Myths themselves are believed to contain magic. The different kinds of magic are enmeshed in the Ifugao mind— "with magic moving to worship, worship passing into magic, with confusion between the personal and the impersonal, between entity and force, symptom, action or feeling."[11] For the Kankanaey and the Nabaloi, the myth in itself is considered as a means to power like an incantation. Dumia notes,

> These invocations, which are always accompanied by animal offering and drinking of wine, are meant to "bribe" the gods and win their favor. The people believe that since certain gods cause sickness, the malady can only be cured by having their deities intercede for the invalid, thus making it necessary to offer sacrifices to several gods concerned.
>
> The exact prayer to be recited by the *mombaki* (traditional religious leader) and the

number of chickens or pigs to be sacrificed... are clearly specified in Ifugao tradition.[12]

Ifugao myths are primarily sympathetic magic. They narrate the story of hero ancestors, gods/goddesses and other supernatural beings that in the past have encountered situations similar to those that are faced by the Ifugaos at present. The myths also recount how the ancestors solve their predicaments, and their ancestors' actions help them deal with present-day dilemmas and challenges.

Sympathetic magic is also considered as a reflection of the kinship principle by the Ifugaos. For example, thunder, lightning, and wind accompany rain. It is in the mixture of these elements that the effect of rain is achieved. Translated into the tribe, when one marries into a family, then s/he becomes one with the family — what one does to one person, one does to everyone.[13] Their reverence to kinship is the binding principle in maintaining the strong belief of the Ifugaos in the supernatural. Their mythology suggests that the powers rely on kinship to make things happen.[14]

The close relationship of human beings to nature is manifested in myths and rites. Even today, Ifugaos still believe that if they will only listen to nature, they will be spared from harm. They study the birds and ants for signs from the gods. Dumia notes that

> Solemn religious rites often preceded headhunting raids. Before the departure of the hunters, animals were butchered and offered to the gods by the *mombaki*. In spite of the precaution, the party had to watch out for bad omen like a snake crossing their path or the wail of a certain red bird (*ido*). If any of these ill omens occurred, the expedition had to be postponed.[15]

They believe that it pays to heed the signs of the gods.

When myths are told, the past and the present, the world of fantasy and reality, merge. *The Tale of the Porcelain Jars*[16] is a good example:

During one of his adventures, Bangilit reaches the dwelling place of the souls. The souls are very accommodating, and in return for their hospitality, Bangilit helps them harvest their crops. After four days, he prepares to leave, thanking his hosts. As a present, they give him four porcelain jars, and lead him to a hole in the sky where a ladder is suspended. He carries the jars on his back, tying them with twine. In his haste, he drops one of them, but successfully brings home the rest.

Little did he know that four days in the world of the souls were equal to four years on earth. When he reaches home, people think he is a ghost, believing him to be dead due to his long absence. He explains that he had been in the land of the souls, and shows his people the jars as proof. Looking at the designs — dragons, flowers, clouds — they believe that they could only have come from another world. However, the myth ends with the mention of the present-day evidence to

convince listeners that the tale really happened.

> The Ifugao folk say, however, that the three jars that Bangilit brought are still in existence. According to them, one is owned by Binway of the village in Buwot; another by Inayaw of Hinagangan, and the third by Buwit of the village of Hapao. Maybe, one day, when you have the chance to go up to Ifugao, high up in the mountains of northern Luzon, you can inquire about these jars and see for yourself the jars that came from the land of the Souls of the Skyworld.[17]

This citation of present-day evidence is typical of the myths of the Cordillera. The belief that myth and reality are intertwined is characteristic of the Cordillera worldview.

The Ifiallig Worldview

The Ifiallig highly regard the spoken word. Thousands of years ago, their ancestors apportioned land among the different families in Barlig by verbal agreement. Changes to these original agreements were also done through verbal negotiations. Despite the absence of written documents, the Ifiallig honor these ancient agreements to this day. Indigenous knowledge like the processes of building and maintaining their *payyiw* or rice terraces, the agricultural calendar, and even their knowledge on the mysteries of nature are handed down orally. For instance, the Ifiallig possess a secret language for summoning elusive creatures like the *sitan* or cicada, and this is passed on through story. More relevant to this study, their literature and their genealogy are handed down by venerable storytellers or *umu-ufok*.

For the Ifiallig, the *ub-ufok* embodies their belief in supernatural and enchanted worlds, yet it also represents their history, their genealogy. For the outsider, these narratives are only imaginary. But for the Ifiallig, they consider the tales, no matter how magical, as factual. Looking into the Ifiallig *ub-ufok* gives us an insight into the way the Ifiallig view their world.

Like the Ifugaos, the Ifiallig describe the world of their ancestors and relate their stories to present-day lives. The *ub-ufok* usually begins with the words *ad pus-oy kanu* (Fil., *noong unang panahon daw*, Eng., *in the days of old*) but is usually interspersed with present-day events and evidence. The concept of time is therefore hazy, and the past is merged with the present in the narration of the *ub-ufok*. Moreover, their ancient beliefs are embodied in the *ub-ufok*.

In the world of the *ub-ufok*, human beings had a close relationship with gods, celestial beings and enchanted creatures. The motif of the marriage between mortals and celestial beings is common.

> Lines of communication between mortals and celestials were quite open in olden times... Mortals who married the children of deities in the skyworld begot progeny who

were immortal. More than those of other groups, the deities of Northern Luzon were strongly motivated toward union with earthlings.[18]

This is true for tales like *Siblaw Taraw, Linmipaw* and *Tilag*. Despite the element of enchantment, present-day evidence is provided by the *ub-ufok*; therefore, the Ifiallig of today still believe that they are descended from their hero-ancestors and gods.

Siblaw Taraw narrates the story of an Ifiallig hunter who chances upon beautiful celestial beings bathing in the enchanted lake called Siblaw Taraw. He steals the wing of the most beautiful maiden, and since she could not return to the heavens, she is forced to stay on earth as his wife. Their union produces a daughter who is as beautiful as her mother. After several years, Siblaw, the mother, discovers the wing that her husband had kept. She is tempted to fly off towards the heavens but seeing that her daughter is still very young, decides to wait until the child comes of age. When the day finally arrives, Siblaw tells her daughter the truth and flies off.

Siblaw Taraw is a version of the Star/Swan Maiden, a common motif in oral tales. There are several versions of this in Philippine myths. To name a few, in *Cordillera Tales*, there are two Ibaloi versions—*The Star Wives* and *Origin of Fair Complexion and Fair Hair (Kapuanan ni Kinaanputi Tan Amputin Buwek)*, and there is the Mansaka tale *Kimod and the Swan Maiden*. Manuel asserts

> A rule of thumb is, the more versions [there are], the older the tale. The distribution of the Star-Swan maiden motif is almost worldwide — a fair index of its age... It is present in the oral traditions of the Chinese, the Koreans and the Japanese, which immediately hints at the direction from which it came... Alaskan Eskimos too have [this] motif in their ancient lore as do several groups of North American Indians. In his monograph (1949), Hatt strongly believes that the North American Indian versions are derivatives of the Asian.[19]

The main difference of *Siblaw Taraw* from other tales is that it continues to describe what happens to the star maiden's daughter. Before Siblaw leaves, she warns her daughter not to participate in any of the rituals during feasts. But during one of these feasts, the daughter is lured by the sound of the gongs, and is coaxed by the performers to join the dancing. She soon forgets her mother's warning and dances magnificently. Because of her disobedience, she eventually dies, leaving her father alone in his old age.

In this tale, the importance of a person's responsibilities to one's children is given emphasis. When Siblaw first found her stolen wing, Siblaw's daughter was but a toddler who was totally dependent on her. Siblaw decided to fulfill her responsibilities as a mother. In *Quest for Meaning*, Florentino Timbreza states that this is one important Filipino value and adds

> When we love someone, we are at the same time being just and responsible for the one we love. To be just and responsible means that we are ready to face and accept the consequence of our act of love.[20]

Siblaw's postponement of her departure meant that she still had to live her life as a mortal and perform her function as the hunter's wife and as mother to her daughter. It meant sacrificing her own comfort and happiness by delaying her reunion with her parents and her sisters, but she willingly took on these challenges for the welfare of her daughter.

The tale also shows the value that the Ifiallig bestow on their ritual dances. Once music is played in a feast, the villagers feel an irresistible urge to dance with the music.

> The dancing women are generally immediately outside the circle, and from them the rhythm spreads to the spectators until a score of women are dancing on their toes where they sat and among the onlookers, and little girls everywhere are imitating their mothers... The dance is in them, and they amuse themselves with it constantly.[21]

Since the dance is part of tradition, it is understandable that Siblaw's daughter would eventually join in. This is compounded by the constant prodding of her father whom she had to obey. This act proves fatal for Siblaw's daughter, as the punishment for disobeying celestial beings is death. The death of one who disobeys the wishes of the gods is one of the motifs in the *ub-ufok*.

Siblaw Taraw also dramatizes the Ifiallig belief in what Timbreza calls *batas ng panunumbalik* (the universal law of retribution). It is believed that one's actions recoil in such a way that negative actions will produce misfortune and positive actions will bear good fortune. Since the hunter deceives Siblaw into marrying him, in the end, he loses his wife and daughter, and does not receive the comfort of having his daughter look after him in his old age. As evidenced in *Siblaw Taraw*, the Ifiallig still uphold their belief in the *batas ng panunumbalik*, the responsibility of parents toward their children, and filial piety.

Every time Siblaw Taraw is narrated, the Ifiallig still believe that the tale is true. To this day, the lake exists and is believed to be enchanted. Whenever the Ifiallig talk about this forest, they always say that the forest seems to have a thousand eyes and that it watches one's every move. Very few people know the way to the lake. Only three people in Central Barlig still know how to get there. The Ifiallig never go there without a guide and they rarely stay the night.

Another tale that recounts a marriage between mortals and enchanted beings is the story of *Linmipaw*. It involves two brothers, Matur-i and Linmipaw. One day, as they go out to hunt, Matur-i checks their animal traps and leaves Linmipaw tending the fire inside a cave. Suddenly, the cave's boulder splits into two and an *engkantada* (an enchanted creature from the spirit world) appears. The *engkantada* asks Linmipaw to become her husband and join her in the spirit world.

Linmipaw agrees, but he requests for time to bid Matur-i and his father farewell. The *engkantada* consents but entraps Linmipaw's feet in stone. When Matur-i returns to the cave, Linmipaw tells his brother that he would soon marry an *engkantada*. Linmipaw tells Matur-i not to worry for he will provide them with meat from the spirit world. In exchange for the animals that Linmipaw drops into Matur-i's traps, Matur-i offers pig fat that they could use as oil in the spirit world. Months pass and gradually the stone covers Linmipaw's body until he is fully concealed. Matur-i continues to visit the cave to speak to his brother who became an *engkanto* (male enchanted creature) in the spirit world.

Linmipaw describes the Ifiallig belief in two worlds—the world of the spirits and the human world. When Linmipaw became an immortal being, he continued to provide food for his brother and ailing father by filling their snares with game. Belief has it that animals must first be slaughtered and eaten in the spirit world. Spirits then drop the bones into snares set by humans and the animals become whole again. The Ifiallig believe that animals that have not been killed in the spirit world will possess supernatural strength and can not be caught.

In the story, while humans ask the gods for food, the gods ask people for pig fat that they turn into oil. To this day, the Ifiallig hunters still offer pig fat to Linmipaw, guardian of the forest, so that they may be blessed with a good hunt. The Ifiallig still believe that animals caught by their traps are blessings from Linmipaw who in the magical land remains immortal.

Tilag is the last story that is centered on the motif of marriage between human and celestial beings. *Tilag* tells the story of a hunter who sees a rainbow and follows its path to its origin until he reaches a stream. There he meets a woman named Tilag (meaning *rainbow*), busy catching frogs. He asks her to become his wife and she agrees. From then on, they live as a couple and bear children.

As proof of his hunting prowess, the hunter hangs the skulls of deer and the jaws of wild boars on the wall of his hut. Soon, the man notices that each time he comes home from the hunt, some of the animal skulls from his collection are missing. He decides to find out who is stealing them. One day, the man pretends to go out to work in the rice fields all afternoon. However at noon, he slowly sneaks into his home, and catches his wife gnawing at an animal's jaw. Tilag is filled with so much shame that she leaves the next day and never returns. However, the Tilag clan continues to grow as her children beget more children. The story ends with the declaration that the descendants of Tilag, the rainbow, are alive to this day.

Tilag is the fifth oldest clan in Barlig Central, following Linglingan, Kiankiangan, Foman-og, and Suptan (see table in footnote).[22] Although it is quite implausible that they could be descended from a celestial being, the Ifiallig believe that members of the Tilag clan are the descendants of an enchanted woman found at the stream from which the rainbow originates.

Like the story of Tilag, *Amfusnun* also recounts the history of Ifiallig settlements. Amfusnun is an Ifiallig warrior who, while on a headtaking expedition with his comrades, chances upon a

woman named Inwayas. She is very beautiful so instead of taking her head, Amfusnun decides to ask for her hand. After their wedding feast, Amfusnun lives in his wife's village, Fianawor. Amfusnun's father-in-law shows him where to clear land in Munporyas for farming. Amfusnun works the land and soon his crops in Munporyas grow abundantly. Unknown to Amfusnun, his brother-in-law envies him and attempts to murder him. But his attempt on Amfusnun's life fails. Remorseful of his treachery, his brother-in-law explains to the village elders that it was his fault and Amfusnun is absolved of any wrongdoing. His brother-in-law dies, and Amfusnun could not bear to live among the people of the man he accidentally killed. Although he loves Inwayas, he decides to move out of the village and to live in Munporyas. As time passes, Amfusnun marries another woman and raises another family in Munporyas. Their descendants may still be found in Munporyas to this day.

Amfusnun begins as a story of how the hero was compelled by tragic circumstances to leave their village and move to Munporyas, but ends with an explanation of the beginning of the settlement in Munporyas.

Amfusnun is probably Barlig Central's most revered legendary warrior. But their admiration for Amfusnun is not limited to his warrior skills and bravery. The Ifiallig take pride in the belief that they are all directly descended from Amfusnun's bloodline. They refer to Amfusnun as their *apo,* meaning *elder* or *great-grandfather.* They regard Amfusnun as a real warrior who lived in the old days and as the pioneer of the settlement of present-day Barangay Gawana. Because of this belief, disputes between individuals from separate communities are resolved by the mere mention of one's lineage and kinship to Amfusnun.

The story contains references to certain traditional practices like headhunting and marriage customs. Headhunting was not unique to Barlig. The practice used to be widespread among the people of the Cordilleras. Headhunting was performed for various reasons. It was done to defend one's honor and territory, to prove a warrior's bravery and superiority in battle. A head taken from an enemy is a valuable trophy.[23] According to Arfonso Nacleo, on rare occasions, headhunting was also done for sport and even women were not spared.[24] In the case of Amfusnun, his motives for headhunting are unclear. However, when he refuses to take Inwayas' head and marries her instead, there ensues a peace pact between their families. Intermarriages between two rival villages promote kinship and peaceful relations among them.

> The friendship between two persons or families from different villages is termed as *abfuyog*... [With the consent of the clans to which the families belong], the abfuyog may then be turned into a *puchon* or a peace pact between the two villages.[25]

The peace pact may then serve as an instrument to solve community conflicts. Members of the community who are related to both clans by marriage or by birth serve as mediators.[26]

Certain marriage customs were also manifested in the story. As Amfusnun did, a bridegroom had to provide at least one buffalo and several hogs for the *chuyas* (wedding feast). Rituals were performed, accompanied by much dancing, on the wedding day. The next day, most guests returned home. Only the immediate family, the village elders, and the *umu-ufok* remained. The feasting and slaughtering of hogs may last for three to seven more days.[27]

The story also presents the traditional judicial system of the Ifiallig. The elders in the ator settled disputes, presided over trials and meted out punishments. When Amfusnun accidentally killed his brother-in-law, his brother-in-law spoke to the *umu-ufok* and confessed that it was he who started to attack Amfusnun. Because Amfusnun only attacked in self-defence, he was not punished by the elders for the death of his brother-in-law.

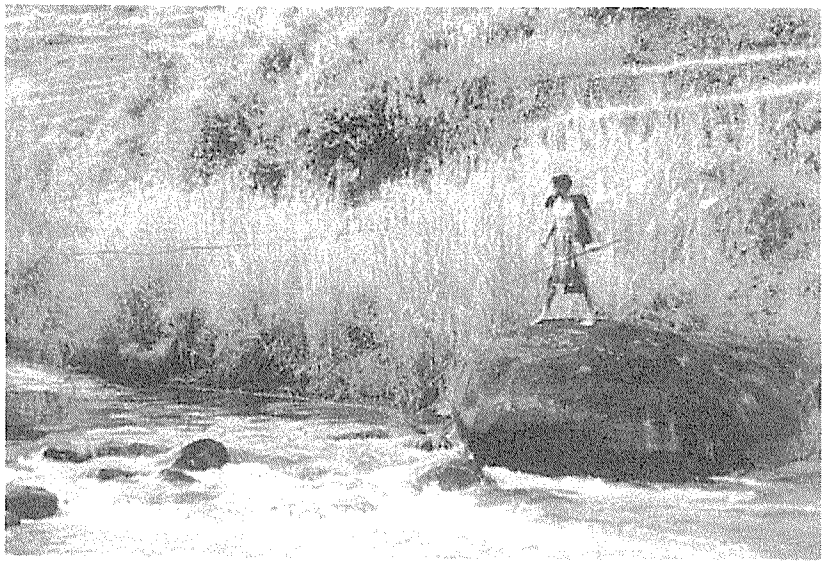
However, Amfusnun still decided to leave Fianawor. His decision is in keeping with the kinship principle that what one does to a person, he does to the whole community. Although Amfusnun did not intentionally kill his brother-in-law, the fact that he is dead still has a detrimental effect on the community. Amfusnun's departure is an act of honor (*dangal*), not of shame. Virgilio Enriquez explains that what is usually referred to as *hiya* is actually not based on *shame*, but on *propriety* and *honor* (*dangal*).[28]

> When a person stakes his *dangal* in defense or in pursuit of a principle or objective, he is staking no less than his *pagkatao* (personhood); his commitment to that end is therefore total.[29]

Amfusnun leaves because it is the right thing to do in order to spare his neighbors from constantly being reminded of their loss. To do this, he sacrifices his old way of life. But in keeping with the *batas ng panunumbalik*, as he does the right thing, he is rewarded with abundant crops, a peaceful life, a new family and community. Moreover, he is considered as the founder of the settlement of Munporyas. The Ifiallig consider this tale as history and as an account that establishes kinship among the people of Central Barlig, Fianawor and Munporyas.

The Tabfiad is the story of how the Ifiallig came to settle in Masiki. The tabfiad was a gigantic snake with arms, legs and an enormous mouth. The tabfiad attacked and devoured the residents of Fiallig. Those who were seized by terror fled to Masiki. But some citizens decided to stay and annihilate the tabfiad. The elders devised a plan to capture and kill the tabfiad. By using a dog as bait, they succeeded in killing the tabfiad. When the tabfiad died, it was transformed into a boulder. Arfonso Nacleo declares that the elongated black boulder may still be found at Kufiang to this day. The following photograph (taken January 23, 2002) shows the black rock formation that indeed looks like the head of a gigantic snake and may be found in Kufiang. The rest of the stone figure lies hidden behind the reeds.

Nacleo closes his narration of *The Tabfiad* by saying that those who survived the attack of



The elongated black stone in Kufiang believed to be the remains of the tabfiad

the tabfiad moved their *ili* (village) to Sachanga. For this reason, the residents of Sachanga still affirm their affinity with the Ifiallig to this day. Like *Amfusnun, Linmipaw* and *Kiangsa, The Tabfiad* serves as an account of the early Ifiallig settlements and the kinship principle.

The Ifiallig belief in the supernatural is reflected in stories like *Kutuktin*. The *kutuktin* are creatures most feared by the Ifiallig. They look like corpses that have come alive. When the moon is full, the kutuktin wander into the village looking for people to devour. The Ifiallig believe that if the leader of the kutuktin is killed, all the rest will perish. The kutuktin may very well be the Ifiallig version of the *zombie*—creatures belonging to the realm of the dead that come alive looking like monsters.

Kutuktin is set in a place called Fiangtin. In the days of old, there was an elder named Lakay Chinomkay who frequently went out at night to catch frogs, small crabs and fish. Across the stream from where he stood, Lakay Chinomkay noticed someone carrying a torch, also trying to find a catch. They got into a conversation and Lakay Chinomkay kept repeating what the other person was saying. Unknown to him, the voice belonged to a kutuktin. The kutuktin was irked at Lakay Chinomkay and planned to capture him in his sleep. That evening the kutuktin, accompanied by his son, carried Lakay Chinomkay off in his *chakurug* (woodboard bed) and threw him off the cliff. Lakay Chinomkay instantly died and the kutuktin ate his remains piece by piece. The kutuktin arranged his bones, laid them upon the *chakurug* and returned them to the ator. The next day, some people who lived in Fiangtin went to the ator of Lakay Chinomkay to share in a warm fire. As they entered the ator, the sight of Lakay Chinomkay's bones filled them with shock. Immediately, they knew that this was the kutuktin's doing. They ran away in fright and informed the elders of the tragedy. The elders then devised a plan in order to destroy the kutuktin. They

gave the task to a brave warrior from Fiangtin. The warrior killed the kutuktin who was believed to be the leader. In the place where the warrior left its remains grew an *atifiangran* (tree from the pine family). From then on, whenever the villagers see an atifiangran, they would say that the tree looks like the kutuktin.

The story dramatizes the role that the *ator* plays in times of crises. Whenever the village encounters a threat, whether it is a tabfiad or a kutuktin, the elders take charge of devising strategies to eliminate danger. The plans usually entail ingenious war tactics that are crucial to the survival of the village. Some of these strategies entail using a dog as bait for the tabfiad, or feigning sleep to catch the kutuktin off guard. During times of crises, the whole village becomes involved in protecting their territory, and in exacting revenge for the death of its villagers, like Lakay Chinomkay.

Traditionally, the *ator* served as a venue for instructing young boys regarding war tactics and values. Most of these instructions were passed on to the young through story. As tales are meant to instruct, *Kutuktin* teaches young boys the value of courage. As reflected in the story, the Ifiallig concept of courage is not the 'absence of fear' but the 'triumph over fear.' The warrior who killed the kutuktin was afraid but he just heeded the advice of the elders from the ator, and just did what was expected of him. His fear prevented him from attacking recklessly, instead he approached the enemy with caution. In the end, he succeeded in defeating the kutuktin.

The Ifiallig are a people who have a strong affinity with nature. This close relationship with the natural world is a central motif in their *ub-ufok*. This motif may also be found in other Philippine folktales. Sylvia Mendez Ventura observes,

> [One] dominant motif is the indissoluble bond between humanity and nature. Nature is represented as an architect-sculptor, who designs and shapes the landscape in response to the behavior of human beings. Every unusual or noteworthy land mass is the outcome of a human act which has somehow affected the natural environment or the community.[30]

This motif is best dramatized in *Maanam-am* and *Kopkoppatti*.

Maanam-am narrates the history of the settlement of Maanam. Elders say that the village of Maanam-am lay on top of the mountains of the village of Tico. The villagers of Maanam-am were fierce hunters who kept the heads of the wild boars that they killed. One of the young men, in a fit of mischief, made a dog wear a wild boar's head. He laughed boisterously, unaware that the gods were watching him. The residents of Maanam-am were punished and this caused misfortune for the whole clan. This shows that the Ifiallig live closely with nature. They believe that any act of disrespect towards nature is punished.

The story continues to say that a boy drank water from the *attong* (trough). The elders

accosted him, saying that the water was dirty and was meant only for pigs. At this, the water spoke and said, "If I were so dirty, why do you use me for your ricefields? It is I who makes your crops grow abundantly." The villagers were stunned. Due to their irreverence, the gods then lay a curse on Maanam-am. The caves crumbled and the ground collapsed. The villagers of Maanam-am were buried in the rubble. Only a few survived. Some of the debris rolled down to the village of Tico. The Ifiallig use stories with supernatural elements in order to explain natural occurences like landslides.

Elements of magic, like the water, the crow and the iguana that can speak are prominent in Ifiallig *ub-ufok*. Magical objects also feature prominently in the tales. In *Kiangsa*, there was a gong so powerful that its sound reverberated loudly across several miles. This magical gong also chooses its owner. In *Kopkoppatti*, there was an enchanted *fianiw* (rice ladle) and *fiakrong* (soup ladle) that transforms water into rice and meat.

Kopkoppatti narrates the story of Wawwus, an old man who led a solitary life. One day, he went to the forest in Furor to cut the area clear of overgrowth so he would have a place to plant his crops. He was able to clear a vast area that day. When dusk came, he went home to rest. The next morning, he went back to Furor but was shocked to see that the whole area he had cleared grew thick again. Wawwus cut the overgrowth and rid the area of weeds once more. But this time, when the day was through, he hid among the fallen overgrowth and watched in wait. At nightfall, he witnessed the approach of a very thin old woman who was all bones. The woman recited a chant, and soon the felled trees rose and the vines banded together.

Wawwus spoke to the woman who was named Kopkoppatti. He found out that it was she who first tilled the land and that some of the plants there belonged to her. To compensate him for his trouble, she invited him to her house so that she may give him some jars or clay pots. Wawwus agreed.

At Kopkoppatti's house, Wawwus discovered that she owned a magical *fianiw* and *fiakrong* that transforms water into rice and meat. They divided the magical objects so that they may both benefit from its powers. Before Wawwus left, Kopkoppatti warned him not to brag about it to his friends, or else it will lose its magic.

From then on, Wawwus simply gathered wood to use for cooking. He no longer planted crops, hunted or raised pigs. He neglected his rice terraces and swidden farm because he no longer needed to work to get food. Many years passed, Wawwus was able to make full use of the *fianiw* and *fiakrong*.

One day, there was a celebration and a neighbor killed his fattest hog. He invited Wawwus to the feast. Because the man was his friend, Wawwus joined them. There was much *fiayas* (sugarcane wine) to drink and it was not long before Wawwus got drunk. In his drunkenness, he became boastful. He bragged of his magic *fianiw* and *fiakrong*. His friends did not believe him at first. To prove it, he asked them to come home with him. When he got back, he tried to use the

fianiw and *fiakrong*, but it had already lost its magic.

The Ifiallig believe that whoever clears and uses common land will own it. In Barlig, land has long been apportioned to different families. Land for the *payyiw* (rice terraces) and even the forests where they can get pinewood for their homes and furniture have already been assigned. But certain areas are considered 'common land' and anyone who has need of it may use it.[31] Like the story *Amfusnun, Kopkoppatti* reflects this belief. In clearing the land, Wawwus should have had the right to its use. But since Kopkoppatti was the first to till the land, he had to yield its ownership to Kopkoppatti.

The *ub-ufok* dramatize the use of incantations, divinations and rituals. In *Amfusnun*, for example, a *chuyas* (wedding feast) was celebrated by slaughtering pigs and offering them to the gods. It is believed that by so doing, the couple will be blessed with children. The *chuyas* is still practiced today.

The Ifiallig use incantations to yield good harvests. This is also evidenced in the *ub-ufok*. In Kopkoppatti, a magical incantation made the trees and vines grow instantly. In real life, the Ifiallig still use rituals and chants for a good harvest and they still follow their agricultural calendar that takes its cue from the cycles of nature.

In *Tilag* and *Kiangsa*, the Ifiallig performed the *ichiw*, an ancient ritual of divination, before setting out on their journey. Elders still perform rituals and forms of divination to this day. To perform an *ichiw*, one has to go out in search of an ancient tree where a red bird perches. The omen is interpreted according to the length, pitch, interval and frequency of the bird's chirping.[32] Moreover, until today, a *patpattay* (a divinatory and sacrificial site), may still be found in Barlig.

> A sacred huge old tree stands in the patpattay area where an old man or old woman prays and [gives offerings] for the spirits. There are two patpattay sites in Barlig Central.[33]

The sites are found in Filig, Barangay Gawana and in Kialling, Barangay Macalana. Traditionally, the *patpattay* was the site where an elder would go to divine their victory in headhunting expeditions and wars. But the *patpattay* has since then had other uses like consulting oracles and performing rituals. For example, the *patpattay* in Kialling was the site where rites were performed to curb the route of storms.[34]

Conclusion

Through the *ub-ufok*, the Ifiallig affirm their kinship principles and values like honor, courage, respect for elders, and the belief in the law of retribution. The *ub-ufok* also embodies their belief in supernatural beings like the *tabfiad*, the *anito* and *kutuktin*, and in magical objects that appear prominently in the tales. In their stories, the spirit world and the real world are usually

meshed together, allowing for marriage between celestial beings and mortals. The Ifiallig usually use mythical supernatural events to explain natural calamities like landslides. Parts of the story explain the origin and history of their settlements, and even serve as a record of their genealogy. Woven into the narrative are citations of present-day evidence that they consider as proof of the veracity of the tales. The *ub-ufok* also dramatizes their rituals like the *chuyas*, the use of divinations and chants. The rituals and chants are still being practiced, and the *patpattay* is still used as divinatory sites today. Lastly, the Ifiallig's unwavering faith in the words of their *umu-ufok*, the keepers of enchantment, is perhaps the strongest proof of their belief in the relationship of the supernatural to their daily lives.

Endnotes

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21 Albert Ernest Jenks. *The Bontoc Igorot* (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1905).
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Estimated growth in population, Barlig Central

Oldest Clans	Before 1900s	Before WWII (1900.1940s)	1940s-1960s	1970s to present
Linglingan	105	130	178	194
Kiangkiangan	99	119	142	161
Foman-og	73	90	104	129
Suptan	40	58	75	97
TILAG	25	40	52	64
Total	342	437	551	645

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