

Entanglement: A Preliminary Study of a Philippine Puppet *Sinakulo* for Children

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ABSTRACT

Staged annually at the Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio Papet Teatro-Museo, *Papet Pasyon* is the only *sinakulo* in the Philippines performed in puppetry to date. In this essay, the puppet play is proposed to be an entanglement of three cultural forms: the literary form of the *pasyon*, the theatre form of the *sinakulo*, and the art of puppetry. The bases for the text of this puppet play are foreign sources namely a children's Bible from Europe, the passion play from Oberammergau in Germany, and the dramatic tradition of the Western musical. Though originally a Western-based text, Lapeña-Bonifacio crafted and encapsulated the puppet play into an hour and a half show that highlights the story of Christ's passion, is written in a Philippine language, and is understandable to young audiences. Its manner of presentation, on the other hand, was inspired by the very rich puppet traditions of Asia, particularly the Japanese *bunraku* and the Indonesian *wayang golek*. The essay begins exploring this proposal of entanglement by introducing Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio, founder of Teatrang Mulat, and her vision of a children's theatre in the archipelago with productions based on and inspired by local folktales and various theatrical forms in the Asian region. This is then followed by a narrative on the genesis of Papet Pasyon, which like most Teatrang Mulat productions, is a product of mixing and matching local and foreign influences. The bulk of the paper is a preliminary analysis and a close reading of Papet Pasyon as a cultural text and performance of entanglement because, generally, the play is a concatenation of the *pasyon*, the *sinakulo*, and various forms of puppetry.

Keywords: Puppetry, passion play, children's play, religious drama, Asian theatre, Philippine puppetry

In the Philippines, the Holy Week is one of the most anticipated and colorful seasons in the Catholic calendar. Locally known as *Semana Santa*, it is considered the busiest period in the Philippine Catholic calendar, as explained by Leonardo N. Mercado in *Christ in the Philippines* and Rafael J. Semilla's unpublished reflection papers about Filipino observances during the said season. Semilla adds that the celebration commences with *Domingo de Ramos* (Palm Sunday) where churchgoers wake up early in the morning to attend the procession of the *palaspas* (palm leaves). The presiding priest of every Catholic Church on this day enacts the grand entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. Over the next three days – *Lunes Santo*, *Martes Santo*, and *Miyerkules Santo* (Holy Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday), *kapilyas* (small Catholic churches) and make-shift community altars all over the islands perform the *pasyon*, a lyric narrative about the life, passion, and death of Jesus Christ read dramatically by devout Catholics in the archipelago.¹

The next day, *Huwebes Santo* (Maundy Thursday), the Church reenacts Jesus's washing of his apostles' feet followed by what Filipino Catholics call the *Bisita Iglesia* (Church Visitation). Filipino Catholics normally visit seven churches to recite the Stations of the Cross. Leaders of these churches decorate their altars with figures found in the Catholic Scriptures, such as flowers, paper mache, sculptures, and other found objects. Friday, called *Biyernes Santo* (Good Friday), is a commemoration of Christ's death on the cross. In the Catholic doctrine, the Veneration of the Cross is the prescribed service and ritual.² Immediately after the service, a procession is normally held where life-size figures depicting the significant events of Jesus's passion and death are paraded in the streets. The next day is *Sabado de Gloria* (Black Saturday). Catholics dramatically renew their baptismal vows and renounce the Devil during the Eucharistic celebration usually held at nighttime. Along with this is the blessing of light and water, signifying the anticipation of Christ's resurrection the next day—locally known as *Pasko ng Pagkabuhay* (Easter Sunday).³

During this season, Catholics also perform dramatic narratives depicting the life, passion, and death of Christ, popularly known as the *sinakulo*. A passion play inspired by the *pasyon*, Nicanor G. Tiongson explains in "The Sinakulo" that the *sinakulo* is typically staged outdoors on a makeshift performance area on any day during the Lenten season, but is more popularly performed during the Holy Week. Tiongson also notes that "*sinakulo* scenes are presented on a proscenium-type stage of bamboo-and-wood or cement-and-steel; under light bulbs that cast an unyielding light instead of creating a mood and against painted cloth or paper backdrops, called *telon*" ("The Sinakulo" 43). In the archipelago, many Catholic communities perform their own versions of the *sinakulo*. "Today, the passion play is popular in a few provinces, where it is known by different names: *sinakulo* or *passion y muerte* in

Rizal, Bulacan and Pampanga; *centurion* in Paete, Laguna; and *tanggal* in Buhi, Camarines Sur” (Tiongson, “The Sinakulo” 43). William Peterson narrates that, in the island of Marinduque, the climax of the provincial *sinakulo* is the beheading of Longinus, the Roman soldier whose vision was recovered when a sudden spurt of Jesus’s blood gushed into his eyes. Sir Anril Tiatco and Amihan Bonifacio-Ramolete report that in Cutud, Central Luzon, the climax of the community *sinakulo* is the actual nailing on the cross of Kristo, the actor performing the role of Christ.

The performance of the *sinakulo* is also considered a communal *panata*. Tiongson (“The Sinakulo”) notes that members of the artistic staff and the actors are all performing a sacrificial vow, oftentimes for their own personal intentions and petitions. There are occasions where a *panata* is intended for the community itself, like the *sinakulo* in Cutud, as documented by Tiatco and Ramolete. According to local theologian and bishop Pablo David, the peculiar characteristic of a *panata* is that it is personal, yet it has to be publicly performed. While the actual performers join the *sinakulo* as part of their *panata*, their devotion is viewed by the public in the same space where they both play the role of devotees.

In Barangay Teacher’s Village in Quezon City, a unique *sinakulo* titled *Papet Pasyon* makes use of puppets and is performed every *Domingo de Ramos*. The performance is also a *panata* and reminds its young audience of the significance of the life and passion of Christ. This *sinakulo* is a children’s play written by Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio in 1985 (See Figure 1). During the pre-show introduction of the April

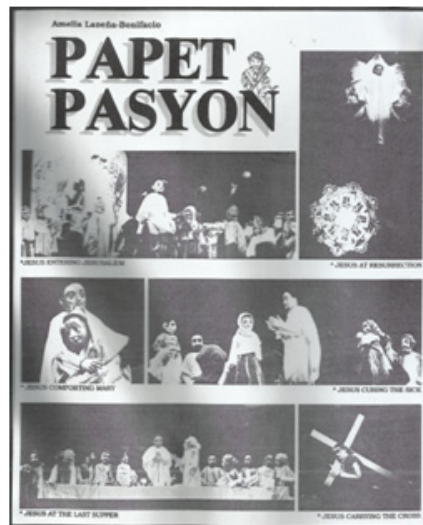


Figure 1. *Papet Pasyon*’s Program Cover for its Premiere in 1985 (Photo: Mulat Collection)

2014 performance, Lapeña-Bonifacio explained that the play is based on the *pasyon* and is inspired by the narratives of the German passion play in Oberammergau and the gospel stories. The 2014 performance was also the 30th year of Teatrong Mulat ng Pilipinas (Teatrong Mulat)'s communal *pamamanata*. Lapeña-Bonifacio originally directed the performance in 1985. Today, her daughter Amihan Bonifacio-Ramolete has taken over the leadership of directing the passion play.

In this essay, we argue that *Papet Pasyon* entangles three cultural forms: the literary form of the *pasyon*, the theatre form of the *sinakulo*, and the art of puppetry. The bases for the text of this puppet play are foreign sources namely: a children's Bible from Europe, the passion play from Oberammergau in Germany, and the dramatic tradition of the Western musical. From the originally Western-based text, Lapeña-Bonifacio crafted and encapsulated the play into an hour and a half show to sustain the interest of its audiences, who primarily are children. The puppet play highlights the story of Christ's passion, and is written in a Philippine language and in simple terms that are understandable to young audiences. Its manner of presentation, on the other hand, was inspired by the very rich puppet traditions of Asia, particularly the Japanese *bunraku* and the Indonesian *wayang golek*.

We begin exploring this proposal of entanglement in *Papet Pasyon* by introducing Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio, founder of Teatrong Mulat, and her vision of a children's theatre in the archipelago with productions based on and inspired by local folktales and various theatrical forms in the Asian region. This introduction is relevant, as it will provide a glimpse and a context of the cross-cultural aesthetics and poetics of Teatrong Mulat, which is also fundamental in our assertion of entanglement in the puppet *sinakulo* for children. This is then followed by a narrative on the genesis of *Papet Pasyon* that, like most Teatrong Mulat productions, is a product of mixing and matching local and foreign influences. The next part is our preliminary analysis and a close reading of *Papet Pasyon* as a cultural text and a cultural performance of entanglement because the play is a concatenation of the *pasyon*, the *sinakulo*, and various forms of puppetry.

ENVISIONING TEATRONG MULAT NG PILIPINAS'S PUPPET THEATRE TRADITION AND THE GENESIS OF PAPET PASYON

Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio founded Teatrong Mulat in 1977 with the staging of *Abadeja: Ang Ating Sinderela* (Abadeja: Our Cinderella), a children's play based on a Visayan folktale. The performance of *Abadeja* was a product of two writing fellowships and some realizations while traveling around Asia between 1973 and 1977.

Awarded the Asia Studies on the Pacific Coast (ASPAC) Research Fellowship (1973) and Ford Foundation Southeast Asian Research Fellowship (1974-75), Lapeña-Bonifacio researched on Asian theatre and observed the traditional theatres of Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. The fellowships were instrumental for Lapeña-Bonifacio to write the very first introductory book on Asian theatre traditions for Filipino audiences titled *Introduction to the Theater in Asia for the Filipino*, which up to date, is still used as a very important reference material for students, researchers, scholars, and general audiences of theatre in the archipelago. After observing theatre forms of these Asian nations, she began writing plays with techniques derived from these forms.

Lapeña-Bonifacio had two realizations during her fieldwork. First, the narratives of these forms are often inspired by stories found in the respective folk traditions of these Asian countries. Second, most of the nations she visited boasted a wealth of literary materials for children. These resulted in the writing of her first children's book of drama titled *Anim na Dulang Pilipino Para sa mga Bata* (1976, Six Filipino Plays for Children) and the writing of other children's plays inspired by different folk traditions. In *Anim na Dulang Pilipino*, Lapeña-Bonifacio compiled different folktales from the islands of the Philippines. These were then adapted into drama using and/or combined with some Asian theatrical forms. She later wrote *Abadeja*, the first full-length musical adaptation of a folk tale from the Visayan Island of Leyte in puppetry. In the final year of her fellowship, Lapeña-Bonifacio penned the first Filipino comedy inspired by the *kyogen* form, *Si Juan at ang Kanyang Madyik na Sombrero* (Juan and His Magic Hat), and the first Filipino play inspired by *noh* theatre, *Ang Paglalakbay ni Sisa: Isang Noh sa Laguna* (The Journey of Sisa: A Noh in Laguna).⁴

In 1977, her vision of making theatre popular to children began to take form. The UP Department of Speech and Drama (now the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts), through the Dulaang UP—the laboratory for theatre majors of the department—invited her to mount one of her plays. That year, on 12 December 1977, *Abadeja: Ang Ating Sinderela* premiered at the Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero Theatre under Lapeña-Bonifacio's direction. After a successful week-long run at the Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero Theatre, the play travelled to other UP campuses, namely Los Baños and Baguio.

After the staging and tour of *Abadeja*, Lapeña-Bonifacio staged three of her plays from the children's book *Anim na Dulang Pilipino* in UP. These productions formed the first repertoire of Teatrang Mulat with actors wearing masks, and performing in the round. A small band of musicians playing bamboo and brass ethnic instruments accompanied the performances. These performances paved the way for the company

to be formally recognized as a children's theatre company in the Philippines. On 12 June 1978, on the occasion of the Philippine Independence Day celebrations at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila, Teatrong Mulat was invited to perform *Tatluhan* (*three one-act plays*) at the Quirino Grandstand, paving the way for the company's national exposure. Since then, Teatrong Mulat performed puppet shows in town plazas, different schools, universities, and museums along with plays written by Lapeña-Bonifacio all over the archipelago.

Since its founding year in 1977, Teatrong Mulat productions have been dedicated to younger audiences. Different productions of the company are based on folk narratives with what Filipinos call "moral lesson." With this, many of the puppet productions of Teatrong Mulat are similar to "morality plays" where good characters triumph over the bad. Mag Cruz-Hatol, former Cultural Center of the Philippines Assistant Vice President and lead advocate for responsible and child-friendly television culture in the Philippines, states, "Mom B [Lapeña-Bonifacio] feels like it is almost a moral obligation to write for children, especially after being made aware of the potency of theatre to provide entertainment and knowledge. Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio peeks into the future and beholds herself building theatres, which will assure children something worthy to see" (26).

The inspirations and influences of Teatrong Mulat's puppets range from Japanese puppet traditions to Indonesian leather (or shadow) and rod puppets. Similar to the Japanese *bunraku* and Indonesian *wayang golek*, the puppet head, hands, and feet are made from wood. For Teatrong Mulat's productions, puppet designers do extensive research on the features of the puppets in order for the puppets to look more Filipino (if puppets are human figures). Led by Paloy Cagayot, artist-woodcarvers from Paete in Laguna carve most of Teatrong Mulat puppets in full detail. The puppets are between 2 to 4 feet high, which is similar to a child's height.

Despite influences from Asian puppet traditions, Teatrong Mulat has created a new tradition in the Philippines by localizing these foreign forms into a local puppet tradition. Lapeña-Bonifacio purposely chose to adapt the Indonesian and Japanese forms of puppetry because of her observation that the Filipinos have been exposed to Western theatre as opposed to Asian theatre. In *Theatre in Southeast Asia*, James Brandon even explains that "to the average Filipino, 'theatre' means 'Western theatre.' Virtually all drama to which he is exposed is based on Western models" (79).

Travel writer and social commentator Pico Iyer may view Filipinos as pathetically good at imitating other cultures but as anthropologist Fenella Cannell argues, imitation or mimicry can "constitute a self-transformative process" ("The Power of

Appearance” 224). Looking at the *bakla* (gay men) in beauty pageants and local singers in amateur singing competitions in the Bicol region of the Philippines who mimic American singers, she asserted that these performances “use idioms thought of as American [...]” (255). Cannell adds that these “move towards the pleasure of empowerment” coming from “knowing the words of a text and making it one’s own” (255). Finally, she observes that in this imitation of popular singers from the Global North, contestants transform “in which what is distant, powerful, and oppressive is brought closer and made more equal” (255). Centered on this disposition of power and intimacy, imitation becomes a creative strategy to access power over the imagined Global North. Imitation, therefore, is not simply about wanting to be like those who are imitated, but a strategy to assert a sense of self.

Cannell’s affirmative stance on imitation could be used as an important conceptual link in the articulation of Mulat’s localized puppet tradition. Like Cannell, the localization (read as mimicry and imitation) of the various puppet traditions of Mulat is not simply wanting to copy *wayang golek* tradition, *bunraku* theatre tradition, or *wayang kulit* puppet tradition, but a strategy for the artists to assert a sense of self—self-consciousness of inventing a tradition that might be conceived as something “ours”— as something unique if not “original.”

In this self-consciousness of inventing a new tradition, Mulat artists employed other creative strategies to localize the flavors of these Asian puppet theatres. These negotiated creative strategies may be read as process of hybridity or interculturality as in the popular and dominant discourse in theatre studies. Nevertheless, we are not convinced with the concept of the intercultural as a framework for the understanding of the poetics and aesthetics of Teatrong Mulat’s puppet theatre.

There are intercultural theatre works which involve mixing and matching of cultural traditions to make a unified whole such as *Lear* (1997) and *Lear Dreaming* (2012) by Singapore director Ong Keng Sen.⁵ But, nevertheless, Teatrong Mulat’s productions are not linked with this intercultural practice as theorists of intercultural theatre often distinguish the difference between the source culture and the receiving culture as in the case of Patrice Pavis in his hourglass model of intercultural performance. Sir Anril Tiatco argues that,

“There is difficulty in pointing the source or origin of culture in the case of the Philippines due to the prominence of colonial influences. In short, Filipino culture is linked with the Hispanic and the American,

therefore not exciting as a reference point in comparison with the most celebrated intercultural sources such as India, Indonesia, Japan and Korea. But nonetheless, what may be useful here is an argument that various theatrical forms in the history of theatre are also products of mixing elements to construct a unified whole” (“Buhol-Buhol” 22-23).

A good example is the *commedia dell arte* in Italy during the Renaissance period, which aesthetically and performatively combined short skits, puppetry, masked dancing, and other popular performance genres of that period in Italian history. Another example is the development of American musicals—particularly the vaudeville, which combined skits, cabarets, burlesque, drag, and other popular musical numbers. There is also the megamusical, which as Scott McMillin explains, is an “integrated” form of drama due to the blending of songs, drama, dance, orchestration, and visuality into a unity or a seamless whole.

Because of such discomfort, we favor “entanglement” more than “hybrid” or “intercultural” in the discussion of Teatrang Mulat’s localization of various Asian forms. The concept of entanglement may be understood as a condition of overlaps and a condition of blending or mixing together. Other key concepts synonymous with entanglement are associations, linkages, relations, proximity, affinity, amalgam, collation, syncretism, and assemblage. As Tiatco explains, “these are the common concepts used in discussing the aestheticized effects of intermingling elements in an entangled phenomenon” (“Buhol-Buhol” 26). The use of entanglement in this essay is an investigation of associations, linkages, assemblages, and networks in reference to theatre aesthetics and themes as used by Teatrang Mulat artists. As illustrated earlier, many artists tend to create a piece of work out of associations, mixing and matching, or putting elements together. For example, in the Japanese *bunraku*, three puppeteers wearing black outfits, manipulate and operate a puppet in unison. Instead of the traditional three puppeteers of *bunraku*, two puppeteers manipulate a single puppet in the case of Teatrang Mulat. Examples of these puppets are the mermaid puppets in *Sisi*, *Sisi: Though a Fish So Small* (1984) and the production of *Sita at Rama: Papet Ramayana* (2005, *Sita and Rama: A Puppet Ramayana*), where two puppeteers manipulate and operate Hanuman or the monkey general.

Teatrang Mulat also tried having three puppeteers to hold one puppet in some of their productions such as the staging of *Two Heroes* (1996), the story of the birth of the Philippine nation via the meeting of the national hero Jose Rizal and the Tagalog revolutionist Andres Bonifacio. Like the *bunraku* stage, the standard stage set up for Mulat puppet performance is the use of two to three levels of wooden panels. The

panels become part of the sets and they are also used to guide the puppeteers in maintaining the height of the puppets. The panels, usually covered with black cloth, partially cover the puppeteers. The puppeteers are visible to the audience, as practiced in *bunraku*. The audience see them wearing black jackets, pants, and head covers. Just like in the Japanese form, black represents nothingness or absence. Another Japanese influence in Teatrong Mulat productions is the use of the *sashigane*, a stick puppet. This is usually used for flying animals, such as birds, fireflies, and mosquitoes as used in *Ang Paghuhukom* (1979, The Trial); and bees, flowers, the moon, and stars used in *Land, Sea and Sky* (1991).

On the other hand, a *wayang golek*-inspired puppet in Mulat's productions is normally supported from below by a rod in one hand, while the other hand operates the rods attached to the puppet's hands. Teatrong Mulat modifies the construction of the *golek*-inspired puppet depending on the movements and physical characteristics of the character. The body of a frog puppet used in many small productions, for example, is attached to a rod while other rods are attached to its feet (so it can leap) and on each hand. The sizes of these puppets range from 1 to 5 feet high. The smallest are the bird, firefly, and mosquito puppets as seen in *Paghuhukom*, and the biggest are the devil and angel figures in *Papet Pasyon* (See Figures 2 and 3).

Teatrong Mulat also uses shadow puppets inspired by the *wayang kulit* of Indonesia and Malaysia. Traditional *wayang kulit* puppets are made from leather with both sides painted using vegetable oils. Examples of *wayang kulit*-inspired puppets are those used in *Ang Pagbibilang ng Buwaya* (1983, The Counting of the Crocodiles)



Figure 2. Puppets from *Ang Paghuhukom* ("The Trial," photo: Mulat Collection)



Figure 3. Angel with Jesus Christ from *Papet Pasyon* (Photo: Mulat Collection)

and *Si Arao at si Bulan* (1983, Sun and Moon). In these plays, puppets were painted on a plastic sheet using acrylic paint. The cut-outs were then supported using umbrella rods. With the use of translucent material, the colors came out easily on the screen.

The most recent *wayang kulit*-inspired puppet show of Teatrang Mulat is *Philippine Creation Tales*, a performance with three to four vignettes on the creation story based on folktales from various islands in the archipelago. For this production, members of Teatrang Mulat cut out figures on file folders and taped cellophane to add color to the puppets. A rod supports the body of a puppet and sticks are placed on the parts which are to be moved.

Since Teatrang Mulat's inception, Lapeña-Bonifacio has served as its playwright and artistic director with an assistant to help her manage the company. In 1989, her daughter Amihan was given the responsibility of managing Teatrang Mulat, particularly overseeing the rehearsals, arranging the schedule of performances, attending meetings for and in behalf of the company, conducting meetings with group members, handling financial matters, among others. Lapeña-Bonifacio concentrated more on the artistic aspects of the productions, such as designing and

painting puppets, putting wigs on their heads, sewing costumes, and designing programs.

In 1985, Teatrong Mulat premiered *Papet Pasyon* at the Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino (Little Theatre) of the CCP. To date, *Papet Pasyon* continues to be a *sinakulo* wholly performed in puppetry. In this section of the paper, we provide a descriptive narrative on how Lapeña-Bonifacio envisioned a children's play on the passion narrative of Christ, which was inspired by her visit to Europe in the 1980s.

In 1980, Lapeña-Bonifacio traveled to Germany to see the *Oberammergau*, the German passion play performed every ten years. When she reached Frankfurt, all hotels were booked and she had to settle for a visit to the route the brothers Grimm took in collecting their folk and children's stories. A colleague and German theatre artist, Robbie Smith, accompanied Lapeña-Bonifacio to a puppet play in Steinau. There, she met Karl Magersuppes, a renowned German puppeteer. Magersuppes toured them to the backstage of his puppet theatre. He handed over an autographed full-cover poster, a children's Bible, a children's book with colored photographs of a TV performance of the *Oberammergau* passion play, and its script in German. A few months later, Smith sent her a copy of the English translation of the passion play.

Frustrated for having missed the *Oberammergau*, she vowed to write her own passion story, which paved the way for the creation of *Papet Pasyon*, which was initially written in January 1985. Because it was difficult to squeeze the passion narrative into a one and a half hour performance, Lapeña-Bonifacio decided to adapt the most important events in the narrative based on the different episodes found in the *Semana Santa* narrative. The decision of transforming the passion narrative into a one and a half hour play was also strategic in a sense that Lapeña-Bonifacio was envisioning a younger audience when she was starting to pen the first draft. Besides, her primary vision in her theatre works is to reach the younger demographics of the Philippines. While Lapeña-Bonifacio was writing the initial draft, other artistic concerns unfolded immediately and were conveyed to the artistic team led by Bernadette Solina. Together with the artistic team, Lapeña-Bonifacio decided that the puppets should look Filipino: pugged nose and dark-skinned. Directing the puppet play commenced in March 1985 with Benjamin Ramos as assistant director. The recording of the script followed.⁶ Rodolfo de Leon composed the music while Lester Demetillo was contracted to render the music during the recording with the use of a guitar.

Papet Pasyon premiered on 5 April 1985, a Good Friday, with a grant from the CCP (through National Artist for Music and then president Lucrecia Kasilag). From 1985 to 1990, *Papet Pasyon* was presented at the Little Theatre and at the Tanghalang Huseng Batute (Studio Theatre) of the CCP. On its second year at the CCP, a puppet of the crucified Christ designed by Carol Castro was included in the performance.

From the CCP, *Papet Pasyon* was staged in different Catholic churches in the metropolis such as the Parish of the Holy Sacrifice in U.P. Diliman; Holy Family Parish Church, Roxas District, Quezon City; Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Project 4, Quezon City; and in the nearby province of Bulacan, particularly at the St. Francis Chapel in Meycauayan. The puppet *sinakulo* was also performed at two make-shift performance spaces in Intramuros, the walled and old city of Manila. In 1993, *Papet Pasyon* found its permanent home at the Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio Papet Teatro-Museo, the permanent theatre house of Teatrang Mulat in Quezon City. Since then, *Papet Pasyon* has been staged every Palm Sunday at 3:00 and 5:30 in the afternoon.

ENTANGLEMENT OF THE PASYON, SINAKULO, AND PUPPETRY IN PAPER PASYON

Papet Pasyon is a performance of two localized religious cultural forms entangled with the art of puppetry. More specifically, the play is an enmeshing of the *pasyon* (a literary narrative about the suffering and death of Jesus Christ chanted in Catholic communities in the Philippines during the Holy Week), the *sinakulo* (a traditional theatre form based on the *pasyon* and the Scriptures, performed on makeshift stages in different Catholic communities throughout the archipelago during the Lenten Season of the Catholic calendar, locally known as *Cuaresma*), and puppet traditions inspired by Asian forms. In this section, we provide a preliminary analysis about how *Papet Pasyon* becomes a performance of entanglement where these cultural forms are enmeshed together, creating a “fuzzing up of conventional classificatory categories due to the collapse of neatly maintained epistemic borders” (10) as Rey Chow explains in *Entanglements* in another context. In this regard, *Papet Pasyon* has become a state of concrete inter-mixing, where a recognition of the cultural forms is necessitated by an attempt to create an assemblage of these disparate elements via the production of a *sinakulo* for children. In order to understand this entanglement, we provide a general overview of the forms associated with *Papet Pasyon*.

First, the play is a *pasyon*—a Tagalog verse narrating the life of Jesus Christ, particularly his passion, suffering, and death. Anthropologist Fernando N. Zialcita and historian Reynaldo Ileto (*Pasyon and Revolution*; “The *Pasyon*”) explain that the *pasyon* in Tagalog is attributed to Gaspar Aquino de Belen’s translation of Tomás de Villacastin’s *Recorrenclación del Alma*, a book of prayers for the dying. According to Zialcita and Ileto, early Filipinos used the *pasyon* text as an *orasyon* (prayer book) for the soul of a dying person and as a text prayer chanted in a wake. De Belen’s translation became so popular that people chanted it even if there was no death involved. The translation later evolved into a poetic-verse narrative titled *Mahal na Pasion ni Jesu Cristong Panginoong Natin na Tola* (1704, The Holy Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Verse). Bienvenido Lumbera notes that the “popularity of de Belen’s poem [...] is attested by the fact that it was on its fifth edition in 1760” (624).

Nevertheless, the most popular text in the Tagalog region today is not de Belen’s but a derivative of de Belen’s *pasyon* published in 1814 titled *Casaysayan nang Pasyong Mahal ni Jesucristong Panginoon Natin* (The Story of the Sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ). Ileto explains that the origin of this text is obscure but, traditionally, “it was written by a native priest named Mariano Pilapil, but recent scholarship has established that Pilapil merely edited the 1814 text, the author of which remains unknown” (“The *Pasyon*” 12). Because of this, *Pasyon Pilapil* became synonymous with *Casaysayan*.

De Belen’s narrative begins with the Last Supper (where Jesus breaks bread and drinks wine with his disciples in celebration of the Passover) and ends with the martyrdom of the Roman soldier Longinus, whose one eye recovered from blindness after blood splattered into the eye when he pierced Christ’s lower abdomen.⁷ On the other hand, the *Casaysayan* is a retelling of the Scriptures from the creation narrative in the book of Genesis, to the passion story of Christ in the Gospels, and finally to the last judgment in the book of Revelation. Henceforth, other Catholic communities call the narrative *Pasyong Genesis*.

The *pasyon* verse is commonly in the Hispanic *quintilla*, a poetic narrative of five lines with eight syllables per line. In some Catholic communities in the Philippines, the *pasyon* follows the form of the *plosa*, a stanza of four lines with twelve syllables per line and often in assonantal rhymes. Many community members perform the *pasyon* during the *Cuaresma*. Locally called *pabasa*, the most dramatic performance of the *pasyon* is held during the *Semana Santa*. Local chanters usually converge in front of a makeshift altar called *kubol*.⁸ Often, two or more chanters alternate in the

chanting. Some communities chant the *pasyon* in an upbeat tempo while others in a slower tempo. In many urbanized centers such as Metropolitan Manila, the *pasyon* is incorporated with popular melodies to invite younger members to actively participate in the chanting.

In another reading, Zialcita proposes that the *pasyon* is the epic of the Tagalogs, despite its foreign origins. Zialcita explains:

[a]ncient Tagalogs had an epic or epics, but they lost these because of missionary prejudice. In exchange they got a new epic, the *pasyon*, which, like all epics, was chanted at various stages in the life cycle, even outside the Holy Season. Though we know little of what the *pasyon* replaced, we do not know that many pre- and non-Christian epics, such as *Lam-ang*, *Labaw Donggon*, and *Bantugan*, speak of mighty heroes who suffered, even died, but came back to life” (19).

In contrast, Ileto asserts that the *pasyon* is more than a Christian epic but a “social epic of the nineteenth century Tagalogs and probably other lowland groups as well” (*Pasyon and Revolution* 14). Ileto’s proposal is related to the close association of the *pasyon* narrative to the everyday life of the ordinary Filipinos or the masses during the time of the revolution (*Pasyon and Revolution*; “The *Pasyon*”). Even Lumbera noted that de Belen’s *pasyon* was so popular to ordinary Filipinos because “Christ, Mary, Judas, Peter, Pilate and other figures from the New Testament are portrayed by the poet as though he were the first man to tell their story. Without falsifying the portraits in the Bible, Aquino de Belen, whether by temperament or art, avoids the stereotype characterizations created by pietistic tradition, and sees the characters as though they were his own countrymen” (639).

In addition, Ileto expounds that the popularity of the *pasyon* is due to its narrative through which many locals vicariously experience popular culture. He writes,

“This is a classic exposition – found in common soap operas and novels – of the role of utang na loob [debt of gratitude] in defining an adult’s response to his mother’s care in the past. For all the comfort and love (*layaw*) that she gave her son, Mary asks, why must she lose him? Jesus, despite his attachment to his mother, can only reply that he has a higher mission to fulfill – to suffer and die in order to save mankind” (*Pasyon and Revolution* 14).

But more than relations to popular culture, what Ileto is implying is the vicariousness of the encounters between the characters in the *pasyon* and the

experiences of ordinary Filipinos in everyday life, particularly during the heyday of the revolution in the late 1800's against the Spaniards and, later, against the Americans. The vicariousness of experiences is in the provision of the *pasyon* with "powerful images of transition from one state or era to another, e.g., darkness to light, despair to hope, misery to salvation, death to life, ignorance to knowledge, dishonor to purity, and so forth" (*Pasyon and Revolution* 14). Ileto adds that these powerful images were translated into a desire for independence and a longing for salvation in the same way the salvation story presented by the *pasyon* through the suffering and death of Christ inspired revolutionists to rise from the tyranny of the oppressors ("The *Pasyon*"). Ileto writes, "during the Spanish and American colonial eras, these images nurtured an undercurrent of millennial beliefs which, in times of economic and political crisis, enabled the peasantry to take action under the leadership of individuals or groups promising deliverance from oppression" (*Pasyon and Revolution* 14)

Papet Pasyon follows the same narrative as the *Pasyong Genesis*, although a heavily modified version of it. The text of the play begins with a chorus singing⁹:

Sa simula, sa kasimu-simula
Hinawi ng Diyos ang dilim sa liwanag
At sa gitna ay nakita ang mundo,
Ang mundo nating umiinog
Ang mundo nating umiinog
Dito'y hinati niya ang lupa sa tubig
At gumawa siya ng mga isda, hayop at ibon
Mga halaman at bulaklak sa paligid na maririkit
At sa dako, sa dako ng huli
Isang matipunong lalaki, matipunong lalaki
At mapang-akit na babae. (Lapeña-Bonifacio, "Papet Pasyon" 1)

[In the beginning, in the very beginning
God separated the light from darkness
And in the center the earth is seen
Our earth that is spinning
Our earth that is spinning
Here he segregated the land from the water
And created the fishes, animals and birds
Plants and flowers in the pretty environs
And in the end, in the very end
A stocky man, a stocky man
And an attractive woman.]

The opening song is suggestive of the creation story found in the book of Genesis. In its first chapter, the Scripture says, “God saw the Light was good, and God divided the light from darkness” (Genesis 1:4). The book of Genesis narrates that the earth was created soon afterwards. This is the same context of the prologue in *Papet Pasyon*. With this, the prologue is reminiscent of the *Pasyon Pilapil* or *Pasyong Genesis* where the first few verses are references to the creation of the world, the creation of the first humans (Adam and Eve), and their fall and exile to the Garden of Eden. Lapeña-Bonifacio acknowledged this source during the pre-show introduction of the 2014 performance.

In the prologue, audience members are also introduced to Hesus (Jesus), the main character of the puppet show:

*Ang paghahawi ng dilim sa liwanag
Ay naganap muli sa pagdating ng kaisa-isang anak
Na si Hesus... na si Hesus
Ang Diyos na sinasamba natin.* (Lapeña-Bonifacio, “Papet Pasyon” 1)

[In the parting of darkness from light
Happened again the coming of the one and only son
That is Jesus, that is Jesus
The God that we worship]

In this song, there is a reverberation of the first chapter of the Gospel of John: “The World became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Lapeña-Bonifacio also announced during the pre-show conversation that the Gospels were also important sources in her writing. *Pasyon* scholars such as Lumbera and Iletto explain that the Gospels were sources of *pasyon* writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The way the songs were sung was also significant in the invocation of the *pasyon* in this puppet performance. In today’s *pabasa*, the chanting is monotonous – almost antiphonal or similar to the technique used in Gregorian singing. The only thing missing in completely making this performance a *pabasa* is the *kubol*. Nonetheless, the auditorium where *Papet Pasyon* is staged yearly has created an atmosphere similar to a *kubol*—everyone is welcome to listen to the *pasyon* and not prohibited to leave the auditorium at any time. Even in common *kubol*, children are brought by their parents to listen to the narrative of Christ’s passion, suffering, and death as an alternative to the catechetical teaching in private Catholic or Christian schools.

Also, it should be noted that the performance is an interpretation of the *pasyon*, in such a way that the narrator is telling the story as if it's the first time. Zialcita notes that, in a *pasyon*, the *tagabasa ng pasyon* (reader of the *pasyon*) chants the verses in the first pronoun. The chanter is like an observer of the different events in the narrative. This is especially true when the *tagabasa* begins to chant the homily-like commentaries found in the verses.

In *Papet Pasyon*, there are two child-narrators who lead audience members to the passion narrative by invoking that they themselves are witnesses to the story of Christ and are part of it. The puppet-narrators designed by Solina, Lapeña-Bonifacio, and carved by Paloy Cagayat are also wearing costumes from the same period as those of the main characters in the play. More particularly, the costumes are similar to the costumes of the apostles, suggesting that the narrators are also direct followers of Christ.

In some Catholic communities in the Philippines, the *pasyon* is not only chanted publicly but also performed theatrically. The performance is traditionally called *sinakulo*, a traditional theatre form in the archipelago that "pictures Christ as a model of meekness and masochism, a lamb accepting death in obedience to authority" (Tiongson, "The Sinakulo" 43). A good example is the *sinakulo* performance in Cutud in the province of Pampanga, which climaxes with the actual nailing on the cross of the actor portraying the role of Christ (Tiatco and Ramolete, "Cutud's Ritual"); and the *sinakulo* in Marinduque, which ends with the beheading of the Roman soldier and convert Longinus on Easter Sunday (Peterson, "Holy Week in the Heart of the Philippines").

There are also productions of *sinakulo* that "spotlights a Christ of reason and resolve, a lion who leads the downtrodden against all oppressors" (Tiongson, "The Sinakulo" 43). A good example is the 1976 production (during the Martial Law regime of then President Ferdinand Marcos) of the Babaylan Theatre Group and the Anak Tibawan, who presented "Christ as a farmer and the Virgin in the tricolor of *inang bayan* [mother country]. He [Christ] is crucified but not resurrected. At the end, the Christ character heads a procession around the chapel (University of the Philippines Chapel), holding up an image of the Motherland in chains, as the community sings *Bayan Ko* (My Country)" (Tiongson, "The Sinakulo" 47).

While the popular *pasyon* (*Pasyon Pilapil*) is a retelling of the salvation history of mankind (from the creation story to the last judgment) in a *pabasa*, the *sinakulo* is focused on the passion story of Christ. Commonly, the *sinakulo* begins with Christ's entry to Jerusalem and ends with his resurrection and ascension.¹⁰

Many Filipino Catholic communities perform their versions of the *sinakulo* with different ways of executing ingenious spectacles. In the Bicol region, the *sinakulo* is called *tanggal*, which literally means “to remove.” Fenella Cannell illustrates that the highlight of this performance is the removal of the image of the dead Christ from the cross. Devotees in this Bicol town perform the *pagpaparigo ki ama* (bathing of the Father) before the image is sent to its burial place via a procession-like funeral. In Cutud, their *sinakulo* is called *pasion y muerte* (passion and death) and, as earlier noted, the climax is the actual nailing on the cross. In Marinduque, the *sinakulo* is complemented by the colorful and huge wooden masks worn by devotees performing Roman soldiers. The climax is the beheading of the soldier Longinus. Teatrong Mulat in Quezon City performs its own version of *sinakulo* via puppetry every year during Palm Sunday.

Like the traditional *sinakulo*, *Papet Pasyon* is loosely based on the narrative of the *pasyon*. The play begins with a prologue that briefly intersects the creation story of the book of Genesis and the Gospel of John to introduce Jesus. Next is the narrative of the passion story to Jesus’s death on the cross, and to his resurrection and ascension. Lapeña-Bonifacio’s script is divided into six acts, each act being a reference to the important events in the passion story. The first act is titled in the transcript as “Domingo de Ramos” (Palm Sunday). In this act, one of the narrators (a young boy) enters and addresses the audiences as “mga bata” (children). The young boy begins the story of Jesus by illustrating his personal encounter with Christ. He tells the audience:

*Ay, ang totoo ay hindi ko na kailangan ang saklay na ito.
Dinala ko lamang para makita ninyo, mga bata,
Na minsan ay isang pilay ako.
Ngunit isang araw, isang araw...
(Lalabas si Hesus)
Ay dumating Siya
At nakita kong maamo ang kaniyang mga mata.
Inabot niya (gagawin ni Hesus), ganito ang aking ulo
At mula nuon ay lumakas ang aking payat na binti.
Ngayon, nakakatalon na ako.
Hindi ba, mahal kong Hesus?
Tingnan mo, tingnan niyo! (Magtatatalon) (Lapeña-Bonifacio 2)*

[Ay, in truth I don’t need these crutches anymore
I brought it here so you will see, children,
That once I was lame.

But one day, one day...
He came
And I saw how kind his eyes were.
He reached for my head, like this
And since then my thin legs became stronger.
Now, I can jump.
Isn't it, my dear Jesus?
Look at me, look at me!]

Like most *sinakulo orihinal* (scripts), a constant episode is an emphasis on different miracles performed by Jesus as written in the Gospels. These miracles highlight Jesus as the messiah and the savior of mankind. Some *sinakulistas* adapt one of the many miracles that Jesus performed in order to prepare audiences in the meeting of Jesus and Herod who challenged Jesus to perform the same miracles for the latter to be released from being prisoner of the state. In the case of this *sinakulo*, the boy narrates how Jesus has cured him from a knee problem.

But then this child-narrator remembers something upon seeing *Domingo de Ramos* flashed on a white screen downstage right. He slowly reads the words projected and begins singing the song "Pagsalubong kay Hesus" (Jesus is Welcomed). In this sense, the first act is primarily the victorious entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem, which, in the Gospels and in popular *pasyon*, is the beginning of the passion narrative (See Figure 4).



Figure 4. Jesus' Entry to Jerusalem (Photo: Mulat collection)

In the second act, “Lunes Santo” (Holy Monday), the same child introduces the very first encounter of Jesus with the high priests. The child narrates that this encounter was due to the uncontrolled temper that Jesus had when he saw the temple transformed into a market place. The third act is titled “Martes Santo” (Holy Tuesday). As in the previous acts, the title is also flashed onscreen. Like other *sinakulos*, the introduction of Mary Magdalene is a very important aspect of the narrative (See Figure 5). Following the story in the Gospels, Mary Magdalene is introduced as the adulteress. In this performance, Mary Magdalene is introduced as a sinner. This, perhaps, is due to the fact that the audience is mostly children. But what is important in this act is the presentation of the transformation of Magdalene from a sinner to a disciple. From here onwards, Mary Magdalene is seen to be one of the chosen few of Jesus, similar to the dramatizations presented in many *sinakulos*.



Figure 5. Magdalena (Photo: Mulat Collection)

In the fourth act, “Mierkules Santo” (Holy Wednesday), the audience members are introduced to another important character in the passion story: Hudás (Judas) (See Figure 6). In the text, Lapeña-Bonifacio introduced the character as somewhat conflicted. In a song number, Hudás narrates, “*Paano ang aking gagawin / Kailangan ako’y maghanda rin / Panay hirap ang nadaranasan / Walang linaw ang kinabukasan!*” (What am I to do / I also need to prepare / All the hardships I have gone through / Tomorrow is still unclear!). This is a very important and celebrated part of the passion narrative of the Gospels and of the Catholic doctrine and, in our reading, is a foreshadowing of Judas’s betrayal.



Figure 6. Judas (Photo: Mulat Collection)

The next act, "Huwebes Santo" (Maundy Thursday), Lapeña-Bonifacio squeezed three important events in the passion narrative in ten minutes: the Last Supper (See Figure 7), the garden of Gethsemane (See Figure 8), and the capture of Christ. A highlight of this act is the appearance of the huge devil puppet, which tempts Christ during the prayer in Gethsemane to be saved from the call of the cross.



Figure 7. Last Supper (Photo: Mulat Collection)



Figure 8. Temptation of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (Photo: Mulat Collection)

“Biernes Santo” (Good Friday) is the next act and the climax of *Papet Pasyon*. As earlier noted, Jesus Christ is believed to have died on a Good Friday. This death symbolizes how humankind is saved from sin. In the puppet performance, Carol Castro’s crucified Christ is shown to audience members, accompanied by sounds of thunder (See Figure 9). Lights are dimmed and a lavender-colored spotlight illuminates the sculpture in a dramatic temperament. At the end of this act, there is a short silence before the child narrator reappears to sum up the different events leading to Christ’s death and to introduce the next and final act: “Linggo ng Pagkabuhay” (Easter Sunday).

In this act, the other narrator tells how Jesus appeared before his mother Mary and Mary Magdalene before finally appearing to his apostles. Finally, Jesus appears in a white cloth and ascends in an ingenious way using ropes and overlapping backdrops of clouds and the image of the Holy Spirit (See Figure 10).

Generally, in creating puppets for Teatrang Mulat productions, Lapeña-Bonifacio relies heavily on Asian theatre traditions. As earlier stated, one of the influences of Teatrang Mulat is the *bunraku* of Japan. A *bunraku* puppet consists of a head, body, arms, and legs operated and manipulated by three puppeteers—all male with one puppeteer for the head and right hand, another for the left hand, and another for the feet—working in unison, breathing in unison, and moving as one so that there is coordination among the different body parts of the puppet.



Figure 9. Crucified Christ (Photo: Mulat Collection)



Figure 10. Ascension of Christ (Photo: Mulat Collection)

Despite the foreign origins, the company has already created an assemblage of tradition that may now be considered a part of Philippine puppet culture. In the case of Teatrong Mulat, puppets inspired by the *bunraku* tradition are also manipulated not only by males but also by female puppeteers. In *Papet Pasyon*, most puppets are *bunraku*-inspired. Female characters (e.g. Mary and Mary Magdalene) are usually manipulated by female puppeteers while male characters (e.g. Jesus and his apostles) are manipulated by male puppeteers. However, there are also female puppeteers who manipulate male puppets (e.g. Jesus and

townspeople). This means, *bunraku*-inspired puppets in Teatrang Mulat may be manipulated and operated by two puppeteers, in comparison to the traditional three and all-male puppeteers in the *bunraku* tradition.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS: DEVELOPING A PUPPET TRADITION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Children's theatre and puppetry in the Philippines blossomed at a rather late stage and was not given immediate attention. The children's theatre movement was activated in the 1970s and gradually became popular. Most of the theatre groups established were patterned after a more Western orientation of theatre. As a reaction to this, Lapeña-Bonifacio first wrote plays for children, with a very specific target—a daughter who was in her formative years. After the initial presentation of *Abadeja*, she noticed the enthusiasm of students who joined the production. This made her think and realize how the energies of these students could be put into use. She eventually founded Teatrang Mulat ng Pilipinas in 1977, with the end view of “opening the eyes” of children in the Philippines to the wealthy and diverse Philippine and Asian heritages.

In this essay, we proposed to look at entanglement as a useful idiom for the understanding of *Papet Pasyon*. The concept of entanglement may be conceived as a state of overlaps and a process of blending together. More importantly, entanglement may be understood as a condition of blurring boundaries or, as Rey Chow asserts, a fuzzing up of categories. This is similar to the discussion of Shirley Gueverra, Corazon Gatchalian, and Anril Tiatco in arguing for the Philippine fiesta as an entangled phenomenon making it more complex than trivial. As they explained, the Philippine fiesta is “expected to be solemn yet at the same time secular, a festivity where neither the State nor the Church is in an ultimate position of authority, a parade of holiness as well as a procession of spectacle” (10). The concretization of the Philippine fiesta as an entangled performance is also useful for the understanding of *Papet Pasyon* as an entangled tradition. The play overlaps, blends, and blurs the boundaries of cultural forms: *pasyon*, *sinakulo*, and puppetry. In this entanglement, there is an attempt to construct a unified whole – an amalgam and a syncretic puppet theatre tradition in the local performing culture of the archipelago.

We also looked into *Papet Pasyon*, a puppet *sinakulo* intended for children, performed yearly as a *panata* by the Teatrang Mulat, the oldest puppet and children's theatre company in the archipelago. The performance is a manifestation of how Philippine

culture contrapuntally engages with its colonial past via the narrative of the *pasyon* and the form of the *sinakulo*, both introduced by the Spaniards during colonization and the dramatic tradition of the Western stage (i.e. musical theatre introduced by the United States and the *Oberammergau Passion Play* of Germany). Hence, the performance may also be positioned not only as a performance of entangled cultural forms but also as a performance of entangled shared histories with the cultures of the said influences.

In conceiving *Papet Pasyon* as a performance of entanglement, we see how the Filipino people negotiate the different colonial histories with their everyday and special life events. The Philippines was colonized by Spain for more than 300 years, by the United States for more than fifty years, and by Japan for three years. A favorite concept referring to this enmeshing is hybridity, as inspired by Homi Bhabha's well-known postcolonial theory. However, a more popular and celebrated concept in the Philippines is indigenization or Filipinization. Both Nicanor G. Tiongson ("What is Philippine Drama?") and Doreen Fernandez use indigenization in discussing the development of Philippine theatre.

In the final analysis, *Papet Pasyon* does not only manifest an entanglement of shared histories but also a cross-cultural encounter with its neighboring Asian countries via puppet traditions. In particular, the puppet traditions devised by Teatrang Mulat are drawn from the traditions of *wayang kulit* and *wayang golek* in Indonesia and *bunraku* in Japan. Teatrang Mulat has created a Philippine puppet theatre for children in this performance, which is based on an entanglement of shared histories and puppet traditions within the Asian region. Ultimately, the entanglement discussed in this essay is proposed to have progressed into a new form of puppetry that cannot be just a *wayang kulit*, *wayang golek*, or *bunraku*-inspired tradition but an entanglement reflective of Filipino creativity and identity.

ENDNOTES

¹ In Central and Southern Luzon, male members of Catholic communities engage in a confraternity of penitents known as *penitensiya* in the Southern Tagalog region or as *pamagdarame* in the Central Luzon province of Pampanga. This confraternity is a *panata* (sacrificial vow) "based on the principles of asceticism with the intention of vicarious participation in the pain and suffering of Jesus when he was sentenced to die on the cross" (Tiatco and Ramolete 60). Participant-devotees either flag themselves with what, in Pampanga, is called *bulyos* or carry a heavy cross as a literal reenactment of Jesus carrying the cross to his death in Golgotha.

- ² Held exactly at 3 p.m., the believed time of Christ's official death, the highlight of this Church ritual is the kissing of the cross by the congregation as a sign of thanksgiving for Jesus's sacrifice to save humankind from sins.
- ³ The *salubong* (literally "to welcome") and the burning of Judas's effigy are the day's highlights. The *salubong* is the Catholic practice of reenacting the first meeting of Jesus and his mother Mary after his resurrection. In some Catholic towns, an angel (performed by a child) removes the black veil covering Mary's face, signifying the end of sorrow and the beginning of hope—the hopeful completion of the memorial acclamation of the Catholic faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again. As soon as the angel unveils the sorrowful mother, the Easter Sunday mass is celebrated. After the Eucharistic celebration, the congregation once again flocks to the church grounds for the burning of Judas's effigy – symbolizing the denouncement of his betrayal to the Catholic faith (since Judas is believed to have betrayed Jesus, causing the latter's life on the cross).
- ⁴ Both plays won the grand prize in the 1976 Cultural Center of the Philippines Playwriting Competition.
- ⁵ While many would argue that *Lear Dreaming* is a pastiche, Sir Anril Pineda Tiatco attested, in his review of this Shakespearean spin-off, to its intercultural aesthetics but the strategy of Ong is more of mixing and matching: "Aesthetically, this 2012 performance was strong, with striking visual design, virtuoso performers, and unexpected juxtapositions. *Nô* master-performer Umewaka Naohiko re-enacted his role as Lear. The only trained actor on stage, he was accompanied by musical artists rather than "actors" to fill the other roles. All of these performers had considerable intercultural musical experience: contemporary female *pipa* virtuoso Wu Man played the Lear's ungrateful daughter; she has been a major collaborator with Yo-Yo Ma on his Silk Road project. Kang Kwon Soon, a leading female vocalist of traditional Korean court music (*junga*) and a member of the Tori ensemble has collaborated in creating Korean fusion jazz, played Lear's (dead) wife. Piterman, a specialist in the Minang music-dance-theatre (*dikia rabano*) of Sumatra who has collaborated with noted modern dance artist Boi Gumarang Sakti, played the loyal fool. Japanese expert Toru Yamanaka provided electronic music and celebrated Javanese composer Rahayu Supanggah led a contemporary ensemble of gamelan musicians. Set design (Justin Hill), lights (Scott Zielinski), costume (Mitsushi Yanaihara), and graphics (Hanson Ho) were crucial to the work and made the piece a feast for the eyes" ("*Lear Dreaming*" 532).
- ⁶ Artists invited to record include Tonton Santos (as Jesus and the devil), Tony Mabesa (as the Holy Spirit and Pontius Pilate), Dodo Crisol (as Judas and Herod), Monette Alfon (as Magdalena), Jorge Hernandez (as Dathan), Erwin Leido (as John), Bong Antonio (as the Pharisee), and Cristina Gosalvez (as the boy narrator). Teatrong Mulat former and present members who recorded the voices for other characters were Fe Corazon Ramos, Suzette Querubin, Cecile Lachica, Bernadette Solina, Ben Ramos, Gerald Liwag, Sarah Roque, Caesar Corpus, Joel Yau, Russell Palmario, and Amihan Bonifacio. Singing voices included Elmo Makil (for Jesus and Judas), Elena Rivera-Mirano (for Magdalene), and then members of the UP Cherubim and Seraphim, Isa Agbayani, Roanne Cabreza, Marsha Dungog, Eiona P. Ho, Denise R. Mirano, and Kalayaan Veal (for the chorus).

- ⁷ Lumbera explains that the narrative of de Belen's *pasyon* opens with "a recapitulation of the prophecies pertaining to the Redemption, and then relates in 22 episodes the events leading to the Crucifixion and finally the Resurrection. The episodes are interspersed with 15 *arals* (lessons) at irregular intervals, whenever the occasion offers a chance for a homily" (634).
- ⁸ In the Ilocos region, the makeshift altar is called *abungabong*, while in Pampanga the *kubol* is known as *puni*. Despite the differences in how communities call the *kubol*, these makeshift altars are similar in their decoration— each has a crucifix adorned with flowers.
- ⁹ The text of the *Papet Pasyon* used in this paper is the 2013 revised version written in Filipino by Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio in 1985. The English translation was by the authors.
- ¹⁰ Nicanor Tiongson in "The Sinakulo" reports that the most comprehensive *Pasyong Genesis* (1814) begins with the Creation of the World and ends with the Finding of the Cross by Helena.

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