

THE EMERGENT AND AMBIVALENT LOCATIONS OF CULTURE: PERCEPTION OF OPEN RATIONALITY IN TIGSIK

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *Tigsik* (banquest toast) is a treasure of the *Bikolanos* for its reference of cultural practices and sensibilities. It pays tribute or criticize people and ways of life, associated to *dalit* and uttered extemporaneously in a drinking spree, simple gathering or cultural festivals. **Methodology:** Considering Homi Bhabha's notion on ambivalence and hybridity and Virgilio Almario's nativist nationalism, these *tigsiks* establish the perception of open rationality in the colonized context on how to get along with the Westerns and modernism, and emerge to the present culture and yet retain their local subjectivities. **Findings** Hence, the paper explores the constructs of orality, metaphor and conservatism to articulate the emergent and ambivalent locations of culture. Each time this encounter between Self and Other occurs at the point at which something exceeds the frame of the image (as in the case of the symptoms analyzed in this paper), **Implications** it evacuates the Self as the site of identity and autonomy and leaves a mark of the subject, a sign of cultural identity, **Originality:** the perception of open rationality. These become the moment in which the demand for identification takes the form of a response to other questions of signification and desire, culture, and politics.

Keywords: emergent, ambivalence, hybridity, culture, open rationality, *tigsik*

INTRODUCTION:

Tigsik or toast is rhythmic and flavorful, carrying culture-specific terms. It can be made of any subject, from religion and tradition, to love and sex, and the performance of *tigsikan* or *tirigsikan* ends when the participants become too inebriated for poetry. "The ritual of *tigsik* is rooted in ancient traditions when men are gathered for a celebration, a commemoration or any event that was significant in their lives as a community. During a celebration, men are gathered in a circle to honor a wedding, the birth of a child or a chieftain's elevation to power, and they drink wine made of fermented coconut water or nipa fruit extract called *tuba*. The drink is poured in cups made of wood or coconut shell and is passed around. One who holds the cup is obliged to recite a *tigsik* before drinking the wine. The *tigsik* may be sincere, humorous, or acerbic, but in all cases witty or satirical. Sometimes the *tigsik* is in answer to or in affirmation of the *tigsik* recited by the previous drinker".¹ *Tigsik* of *Bikolanos* testifies an oral history because it recounts the exchange of personal memories and even histories of those who experienced historical eras, oral history and verbal expressions where the technologies of literacy are unfamiliar to most of the population (Banzuela, et al.)². This involves what Chancoco³ argued that to trace the *birtud* (power) of indigenous *Bikol* poetics, *Bikolanos* must seek to reclaim indigenous poetics in conjunction with the useful insight we

¹ Note from Conversation with Abdon Balde in fb messenger 2024

² Banzuela, Belgica & Guanzon (2011), *Tigsik of the Bikols*. Legazpi City: J&E Printing Press.

³ Chancoco, Jose Jason (2008). *Pagsasatubuanan: Poetikang Bikolnon*. Manila: NCCA.

get from foreign modalities. Virgilio Almario once recalled: “... *pag-aralan ang panitikan ng Filipinas bilang panitikang Filipino. Tuklasin ang mga ugat at simula nito ... batay sa malikhaing pagsasanib ng banyaga’t katutubo*”.⁴ (“... *there’s a need to interrogate Philippine literature as literature of the Filipinos. Discover its roots and origin ... based from the creative union of the colonized and colonizer.*”) Since *tigsik* has evolved from its oral tradition because of colonization and technology, its literary qualities and characteristics have been placed to question whether the poet (*paratigsik*) still follow the tradition and its poetics. Thus, with this emerging phenomenon in *tigsik*, this paper interrogates the different postcolonial symptoms of hybridity and rationality.

The Cultural Theoretical Thought: The ‘Location of Culture’

In the olden days, the Spanish missionaries in *Bikol* used poetry for conversion, then later, the native poets recited *loas* (poem or praise) for poetic romances of legendary-religious or chivalric-heroic origins (Realubit 1996).⁵ *The Bikols* sang the beauty of their land and told stories of experience and events in their lives. On record are the *kangsin* (*tigsik*) or *abatayo* as banquet toasts known for wit, brevity, and sparkle; improvised poems which related battles and wars in the town; and exploits of new heroes, seismological and geological phenomena, massacres, strong tremors, explosion of volcanoes, or devastating typhoon (Castano 1895).⁶ The social life is enlivened by toasts called *tigsik*. These are four-line verses occasioned by happy gatherings whether around a *sari-sari* or variety store or during feasts. Toasts can be made on any subject, from religion and tradition to love and sex, and the *tigsikan* ends when the participants become too inebriated for poetry (Realubit 1999).⁷ However, in the contemporary practice, *tigsik* faces transformation, which noted *Bikolano tigsik* masters (poets) like national artist in literature Abdon Balde and “*tigsik* queen” Aida Cirujales, and *Bikol* critics like Raffi Banzuela, et.al. and Jason Chancoco express their dismay to young aspiring poets who write and perform *tigsik* without considering its customary aesthetics, intention and form. *Tigsik* performed or written by these contemporaries resonate to a spoken poetry or an emerging poetry. Its literary qualities and characteristics have been placed to question (Balde 2024;⁸ Cirujales;⁹ Banzuela, et.al 2011;¹⁰ Chancoco 2008¹¹). Nevertheless, it is believed that when oral tradition dies, it follows the loss of memories of the past, its art form, poetics and philosophy, which at the end, the contemporary generation may suffer from cultural alienation in the future of their indigenous cultural and literary tradition.

Through inventive or re-inventive use of language, poets can encapsulate and communicate complex themes and issues, making them accessible and relatable to the audience. The concepts of postmodernism and postcolonialism further elucidate

4 Almario, Virgilio (2006). *Pag-unawa sa ating Pagtula: Pagsusuri at Kasaysayan ng Panulaang Filipino*. Manila: Anvil Publishing, Inc. p. 18.

5 Realubit, Ma. Lilia F. (1996). *A Journal of Bikol Writing*. Manila: NCCA, p. 20.

6 Castano, Fr. Jose (1895). “Breve Noticia Acerca del Origen, Religion, Creencias y Supersticiones de los Antiguos Indios de Bikol,” *Archivo del Biblifilo Filipino. Vol 1*, Madrid in *Bikol Literary History* p. 37

7 Realubit, Ma.Lilia F. (1999). *Bikol Literary History*. Naga City: ____.

8 Note from conversation with Abdon Balde in fb messenger 2024

9 Note from conversation with Aida Cirujales, October 2024

10 Banzuela, Belgica & Guanzon (2011), *Tigsik of the Bikols*. Legazpi City: J&E Printing Press.

¹¹Chancoco, Jose Jason (2008). *Pagsasatubuanan: Poetikang Bikolnon*. Manila: NCCA.

this discussion. As J. Neil Garcia (2004)¹² suggests, postcolonialism unveils the interdependence of the 'Self' and the 'Other,' highlighting the inherent contradictions in attempts to disengage from prevailing influences. Similarly, the notion of hybridity reveals how both indigenous and foreign elements are inexorably altered from their initial encounter, suggesting a continuous process of cultural transformation and synthesis. In his lecture, Michael Coroza (2007)¹³ presents a nuanced perspective on the assimilation and adaptation processes within colonized cultures. The essence of his argument lies in the selective acceptance or modification of the colonizer's elements, which are then seamlessly integrated into indigenous practices. This approach suggests a form of resistance or reinterpretation rather than outright acceptance, where the colonized society adopts foreign elements but adapts them to fit within their traditional framework, thereby creating a unique, hybridized form. Utilizing deconstruction and linguistic tools allows for a deeper examination of these adaptations, emphasizing the importance of difference - "what makes us distinct from them." This inquiry articulates into the identity formed through differentiation from the colonizer, questioning the dominant forms imposed by the colonizer and how these are appropriated and transformed by indigenous cultures to reflect their own identity and values. Thus, in examining the postcoloniality of these *tigsik* texts, this paper uses Homi Bhabha's Third Space¹⁴ and Virgilio Almario's nativist-structuralist¹⁵ perspectives, which interrogate the colonized metamorphosis in the modern-emerging platforms. The Third Space articulates experiences by the colonized subject framed in the West and since Western theories use certain criteria that are incongruous to the complexities and cultural provenance of postcolonial writings and therefore cannot adequately evaluate and give legitimacy to these literature produced out of colonization, thus postcolonial theory may address. This theory attempts to identify the general characteristics of writings born out of colonization and to present a different set of criteria or literary norms by which postcolonial writing ought to be evaluated. Bhabha noted it is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the beyond. He stressed however, that... the 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past... the emergent culture carries within it the dominant culture that it opposes, resulting into a hybrid of culture - a fusion of the dominant trends of the past and a new cultural emergence. The emergent culture never succeeds in creating a new culture which is pure and free from the influence of the dominant culture, for ... the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different - a mutation, a hybrid (34).¹⁶ In his discussion on hybridity and multiplicity of emergent cultures, he concludes that the multiplicity of emergent culture as revealed through language shows that an emergent culture is a hybrid opposition and adherence to dominant culture. Bhabha further articulates that the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. Hence, understanding the nuances of orality, metaphor and conservatism trace back realm of the beyond, and an on-going negotiation between poetics and ambivalent signification of mainstream and marginal. Thus, postcolonialism and deconstruction together serve as a means to reclaim what has been marginalized or overlooked, shedding light on indigenous consciousness that differs from the imposed colonial narratives. This involves a critical examination of the *tigsiks*, its practices and cultural products to uncover underlying assumptions and power dynamics. By deconstructing these elements, one can reveal the layers of meaning and resistance embedded within indigenous practices and how *paratigsik* (poet) articulates his/her distinct worldviews and knowledge systems. This process of reclamation is not just about recovering what was lost or suppressed but also about asserting the value and validity of indigenous perspectives and forms of knowledge. It challenges the hegemony of colonial narratives and seeks to restore a sense of agency and dignity to colonized peoples by highlighting their ability to adapt, resist, and redefine their identities in the face of external pressures.

Engaging with postcolonial theories is essential for an analysis of these *tigsiks*, as these theories provide valuable insights for understanding and potentially re-evaluating contemporary Filipino art and literary

¹² Garcia, Neil (2004). *Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: Essays and Critiques* (Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press).

¹³ Michael Coroza (2007).

¹⁴ Bhabha, Homi (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

¹⁵ Almario, Virgilio (2001). *Mutyang Dilim: Ang Bagong Pormalismong Filipino sa Pagbasa ng Tula*. Marikina City: Talingdao Publishing House

¹⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonder" in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 34.

theories within this multifaceted context. Virgilio Almario (2001)¹⁷ argues that there is a need to awaken nationalism among Filipinos, and at least redeem themselves from the Western's influence and subjectification. It is then the duty of the poet to find alternative reading and appreciation to assert his indigenous consciousness and nativist conservatism foregrounded by modernism. Almario narrates, "*Kailangan himukin ang taumbayang tumulong bumangon sa kinasadlakang kumunoy ng isip at damdamin, makilahok sa paghahanap ng bagong Filipinas. Tungkulin ng makata na tumuklas ng bagong pagtanaw, ... upang sinupin ang pambansang gunita at upang hindi tayo magmistulang dayuhan sa sariling bayan [at] maging ganap na malay ang Filipino katulad ng manunuri sa tula, hinggil sa pagbabagong nililikha ng modernidad*".¹⁸ (There's a need to encourage the people to help in reclaiming its position and identity from the Western's subjectification and join in relocating the new nation.) Almario encourages the once colonized poet to liberate emerging poetics in appropriating back his national consciousness and prevent himself from being a stranger in his own culture and poetics. In his book, *Balagtasismo versus Modernismo*¹⁹, Almario blames the outdated, colonial minded criticism that evaluates Filipino literature according to Western standards. He asserts that even as it recognizes the admixture of indigenous and foreign elements in the chosen text, such criticism almost always overlooks the former's successful attempts to appropriate the latter (Garcia 2004).²⁰ Moreover, Almario's publications *Ang Hudhud ni Rio Alma*

(2009)²¹ and *Bagong Pormalismong Filipino* (2006)²² posit into themes of nationalism and suggest a shift in how Filipino literature is taught and interpreted, advocating for an approach less influenced by Western frameworks. These works aim to free the indigenous metaphor (*katutubong talinghaga*), from the complexities of precolonial and postcolonial influences. Garcia (2004)²³ suggests that the distinct blend of cultural influences in the Philippines, including its colonial legacy and the evident fragmentation of its identity, is a critical aspect that must be considered in any contemporary Filipino study.

Tigsik by *Bikolanos* continuously searches in filling the gap between "I" and "Other". These are issues on culture, identity and rationality, which are still a phenomenon with certain ambiguity and complexity. *Tigsik* testifies an oral history because it recounts the exchange of personal memories and even histories of those who experienced historical eras, oral history and verbal expressions where the technologies of literacy are unfamiliar to most of the population (Banzuela, et al.)²⁴. This involves what Chancoco²⁵ argued that to trace the *birtud* (power) of indigenous *Bikol* poetics, *Bikolanos* must seek to reclaim indigenous poetics in conjunction with the useful insight we get from foreign modalities. Virgilio Almario once recalled: "... *pag-aralan ang panitikan ng Filipinas bilang panitikang Filipino. Tuklasin ang mga ugat at simula nito ... batay sa malikhaing pagsasanib ng banyaga't katutubo*".²⁶ ("... there's a need to interrogate Philippine literature as literature of the Filipinos. Discover its roots and origin ... based from the creative union of the colonized and colonizer.") Since *tigsik* has evolved from its oral tradition because of colonization and

¹⁷ Almario, Virgilio (2001). *Mutyang Dilim: Ang Bagong Pormalismong Filipino sa Pagbasa ng Tula*. Marikina City: Talingdao Publishing House.

¹⁸ Almario, Virgilio (2001). *Mutyang Dilim: Ang Bagong Pormalismong Filipino sa Pagbasa ng Tula*. Marikina City: Talingdao Publishing House. p 6.

¹⁹ For this discussion on Balagtasismo and Modernismo, see: Virgilio S. Almario, "Pasakalye," "Balagtasismo versus Modernismo: Panulaang Tagalog sa Ika-20 Siglo (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1984), 1-36 in J. Neil Gracia (2004). *Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: Essays and Critiques* (Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press), 17-18.

²⁰ Garcia, J. Neil (2004). "*Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: An Introduction*", *Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: Essays and Critiques*. Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, p. 15.

²¹ Baquiran, Romulo (2009). *Ang Hudhud ni Rio Alma*. Manila: NCCA.

²² Almario, Virgilio (2001). *Mutyang Dilim: Ang Bagong Pormalismong Filipino sa Pagbasa ng Tula*. Marikina City: Talingdao Publishing House.

²³ Garcia, J. Neil (2004). "*Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: An Introduction*", *Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: Essays and Critiques*. Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press.

²⁴ Banzuela, Belgica & Guanzon (2011), *Tigsik of the Bikols*. Legazpi City: J&E Printing Press.

²⁵ Chancoco, Jose Jason (2008). *Pagsasatubuanan: Poetikang Bikolnon*. Manila: NCCA.

²⁶ Almario, Virgilio (2006). *Pag-unawa sa ating Pagtula: Pagsusuri at Kasaysayan ng Panulaang Filipino*. Manila: Anvil Publishing, Inc. p. 18.

technology, its literary qualities and characteristics have been placed to question whether the poet (*paratigsik* such as the *tigsik* masters or *tigsik* enthusiasts) still follows the tradition and poetics.

The Postcolonial Construct: Orality, Metaphor and Conservatism

This paper determines the postcolonial constructs of orality, metaphor and conservatism through indepth text analysis, interrogating the metaphoric and metonymic meaning of the texts. The *tigsiks*' collection were submitted to functional translation in English for universal understanding particularly for non-*Bikol* language speakers. The translation is guided with Eugene Nida's principles of correspondence.²⁷ Moreover, this paper utilizes 100 *tigsik* to present the discussion in a full landscape. The discussion commences with the articulation of the recurrent postcolonial themes of hybridity and ambivalence, appropriation and abrogation of language, and rationality which resurface in different guises throughout this *tigsik* collection, and ends by interpellating the notion of modern orality, millennial metaphor and structured conservatism. The *tigsik* samples which have been included in this paper, represent only how other *tigsiks* were interrogated. Consider this:

(1) *Tigsik ko an paggibo nin mga historia,
An pagsurat kaini, bakong madali sana.
Nangangaipo ini, nin hararom na ideya,
Tanganing mabinser an mga parabasa.*²⁸
(I raise a toast, to the craft of storytelling,
In the process of writing is not an easy one.
It requires depths of thought,
To let reader believes to narratives unfold.)

This *tigsik* conveys the nuanced art of storytelling, recognizing it as a craft that extends far beyond the mere construction of words into sentences. Storytelling, at its core, is an intricate process that demands a fusion of creativity, deep-seated ideas, and a profound understanding of human emotions and experiences. Consider these lines, *An pagsurat kaini, bakong madali sana/ Nangangaipo ini, nin hararom na ideya* (*In the process of writing is not an easy one./ It requires depths of thought*). This reminds the *paratigsik* that in the process of writing or of impromptu performance, it is not an easy task to create *tigsik* outright because it requires depths of thought. This *tigsik* serves as an ode to the dedication and thoughtfulness that storytellers invest in their work, underscoring the challenges they face in crafting narratives that not only engage but also resonate with their audience on an emotional and intellectual level. The emphasis on a depths of thought and creativity points to the necessity for storytellers to draw from a rich reservoir of knowledge, imagination, and insight. This act is a process of discernment or meditation which is a requisite to create a thought provoking verse. Aida Cirujales once noted, *Pinaghuhurohuropan nin hararum ang sasabihun bago sambiton ang tigsik, minsan ini sarung tipsik kang isip, minsan hararum ang pinaghahalean. (Before a tigsik is verbalized, must have been deeply contemplated, sometimes it's a significant insight, or it has a deep reference).*²⁹ Thus, in creating a *tigsik*, it requires contemplation and discernment, to generate that insights or critical ideas which resonate from a deep seated-baggage and/or experience, because the *tigsik* acknowledges the meticulous and often painstaking effort that goes into the storytelling process. It is a recognition of the storyteller's role as not just a narrator but as a storyteller who molds and shapes the narrative with precision and care, ensuring that each element serves a purpose and contributes to the overall impact of the narration. Take note these lines from the poem: *Nangangaipo ini, nin hararom na ideya/ Tanganing mabinser an mga parabasa. (It requires depths of thought,/ To let reader believes to narratives unfold)*. These lines posit that *tigsik* requires depths of thought, to let the reader/audience believes to the life within being narrated. Moreover, the art of extemporaneous performance of *tigsik* requires a *paratigsik* (poet) to infuse his unique style, drawing from his personal aesthetic and poetic sensibilities to express his thoughts and feelings. Abdon Balde argues that in crafting

²⁷ Nida, Eugene in Lawrence Venuti (2000). "Principles of Correspondence", The Translation Studies Reader. London & New York: Routledge.

²⁸ Note from conversation with Aida Cirujales, October 2024

²⁹ Ibid. Aida Cirujales.

rawitdawit, the poet employs a distinctive freestyle, enriching the *tigsik*'s aesthetics and poetics.³⁰ Balde's observation emphasizes the creation of a freestyle aesthetic in *rawitdawit*, alongside the impacts of neocolonialism and

postmodernism, suggesting a belief in logical plurality and the absence of a definitive structure. Moreover, understanding the nuances of *paghurophurop* (open rationality) embedded in the *tigsik* and from *paratigsik*'s performance traces back realm of the beyond, and an on-going negotiation between sensibility and ambivalent signification of mainstream and marginal. This ambivalent signification is what Bhabha (1994) calls "splitting". "Splitting is an intricate strategy of defense and differentiation in the colonial or postcolonial discourse. This process allows the native, or the subaltern the strategy of attempting to disarticulate the voice of authority, the voice of the mainstream at the point of splitting or ambivalence."³¹ Thus, the current trend in crafting *tigsik* particularly in the performance by the contemporaries which negates the traditional structure and applies a new version of *tigsik*'s performance creates a subjective and ambivalent symptoms. Here's another *tigsik* to consider:

(2) *Tigsik ko an tigsik na nakakaanggot,
Orog na kung ginagamit sa pagborobentot.*

*Kun may tinatamaan, makulog sa boot,
Maski bakong pigpunto
Biyong nagpopongot.*³²

*(I raise a toast to a tigsik with an infuriating downpour,
Especially when used to provoke, even more.
If one gets hit, it stings the soul,
Unintentionally targeted or not, it takes an irksome toll.)*

This *tigsik* addresses the impact of words, particularly when used to provoke or insult; it speaks to the dynamics of language, which is a site for power and discourse. Take note these lines: *Tigsik ko an tigsik na nakakaanggot/ Orog na kung ginagamit sa pagborobentot.* (*I raise a toast to a tigsik with an infuriating downpour/ Especially when used to provoke, even more*). The metaphor of words as an "infuriating downpour" that can sting the soul, even unintentionally, illustrates the contentious nature of language, where the *Bikol* language and its impositions continue to influence and shape social and personal interactions. This *tigsik* underscores the double-edged nature of language: as a tool for empowerment and expression but also as a vehicle for perpetuating power and conflicts. Consider these lines: *Kun may tinatamaan, makulog sa boot,/ Maski bakong pigpunto/ Biyong nagpopongot.* (*If one gets hit, it stings the soul,/ Unintentionally targeted or not, it takes an irksome toll.*) The verse lines are straightforward, and it hits the audience unintentionally where the audience's reactions define the meaning of the *tigsik*. The poem highlights the metaphoric tendencies which engages on themes of identity, power, and resistance, albeit from different angles. The use of metaphor in both poems serves to deepen the exploration of these themes, offering insights into the complexities of postcolonial life and the ongoing struggle for decolonization and self-definition. William Franke (2000)³³ interpellates that all language is metaphorical and paradoxical. Thus, metaphor is intelligible only by contrast to literal language. I.A. Richards describes it as, "how words work" and of "how thought goes on" (1965, 8:115). Richards in his fundamental inquiry into "how words mean," metaphor emerges as the "omnipresent principle of language" (92), and metaphor was no longer treated as just a technical device but as the mainspring of language's functioning.³⁴ The poem, then, expresses a view of metaphor as rhetorical artifice, as composition and invention with words, but also as natural that metaphor, should nevertheless somehow be found lurking within the very nature of things, splitting apart their hard centers of self-enclosure and claiming their innermost reality. Thus, language plays a crucial role in this context, acting as both a medium of expression and a

³⁰ Note from conversation with Abdon Balde in Cagsawa Cultural Festival, February 2024.

³¹ Bhabha, Homi (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

³² Note from conversation with Aida Cirujales, October 2024

³³ Franke, William. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*. Vol 33, no.2, "Metaphor and the Making of Sense: The Contemporary Metaphoric Renaissance". Penn State University Press. p. 140-141 Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable> on July 10, 2024.

³⁴ Ibid. Franke, William

repository of cultural identity. Here, the style of toast, roast or joust communicates complex themes and issues, making the *tigsik* a conduit for meditation and discernment.

Each *tigsik* encounter is an exciting and exotic moment. It is a time for poetry, for soaring spirits, for fitting messages to be truly and permanently memorable even when memory later on takes them for granted. This era, marked by struggles for independence and identity, witnessed the *tigsik* evolve beyond its conventional bounds of personal expression or community entertainment. It transformed into a nuanced medium, embedding profound metaphors and similes that, while ostensibly focusing on everyday life, rural landscapes, or personal emotions, discreetly conveyed a collective moral grief and critique against the injustices, deprivations, and the harsh realities under colonial rule. The metaphorical use of *tigsik* as a means to express “conservatism” can be intriguingly explored within this context. Conservatism, in this sense, may not align with its modern political connotation of preserving traditional values but could rather be seen as a form of cultural and moral preservation against the erosive forces of colonialism. Through *tigsik*, the *Bikolano* people could encode their longing for social justice, their adherence to ancestral values, and their resistance to the forced assimilation and cultural domination by the colonizers. The metaphorical language allowed these messages to be cloaked in a way that could bypass censorship or direct retaliation, acting as a form of covert resistance. In this light, *tigsik* poems were not mere lamentations but were imbued with a deeper sense of conservatism as a defense mechanism - a preservation of identity, dignity, and moral values in the face of overwhelming external power. This form of poetic expression became a subtle yet powerful means of sustaining the community’s spirit and keeping alive the flames of resistance and hope for autonomy and justice. The *tigsik*, therefore, stands as a testament to the resilience and ingenuity of the Filipino spirit, using the power of metaphor and the veil of poetry to safeguard their core values and beliefs amidst the turmoil of colonization. Banzuela once noted “The next time you listen to *tigsik*, listen to it with the ear of your ear and you will find it yielding a reflection implicit not only of the *Bikolano* wit but also of the genuine emblem of the *Bikolano*’s nurtured identity.”³⁵ Take note:

(3) *Tinigsik ko ining kagayonan*
Kaining sakong kahampang
Tanganing dai niya malingawan
*Sagkod na ako magadan.*³⁶

I drink to the beauty
Of this lass in my front
That she may not forget me
Till the day I die.)

This *tigsik* captures a deeply personal and romantic sentiment, expressed through the metaphor of drinking to the beauty of a beloved person. This act of “drinking” symbolizes not just a mere appreciation of the beauty but an attempt to internalize and become one with the essence of the admired person. The speaker desires to be so profoundly remembered by the lass that his memory becomes an indelible part of her consciousness, lasting until his demise. In the context of the use of metaphor, the *tigsik* interestingly blends traditional poetic expression with a universal theme of love and remembrance that transcends time. While the *tigsik* does not explicitly use modern imagery or language, the millennial metaphor can be seen in the underlying desire for permanence and significance in the digital age, where memories and relationships can be fleeting and easily forgotten. Today, the quest for lasting impact and to be remembered fondly could parallel the digital footprints we leave on social media, the photos we share, or the messages we send, hoping they will keep our presence alive in others' lives even in our absence. This *tigsik*, though

³⁵ Banzuela, Belgica & Guanzon (2011), *Tigsik of the Bikols*. Legazpi City: J&E Printing Press, p. 16

³⁶ Ibid. Banzuela, Belgica & Guanzon.

rooted in traditional form, resonates with the millennial yearning for connection and remembrance amidst the ephemeral nature of contemporary life. Furthermore, the metaphor of drinking to someone's beauty reflects a desire to capture and hold onto moments of joy and connection, a sentiment that resonates across generations but takes on new dimensions in the context of millennial concerns with authenticity and meaningful relationships. The *tigsik*, in its elegant simplicity, thus bridges the gap between the traditional and the contemporary, illustrating how the human heart's desires remain constant even as the world changes around it.

The metaphoric-metonymic descriptions or symptoms present how the poems utilize and appropriate the *Bikolano* language in asserting indigenous identity, employ traditional verse forms to connect past and present, incorporate local cultural references to highlight adaptability, address socio-political issues to emphasize educational and societal values, blend traditional and modern styles to create a hybrid literary form, balance form and content to reflect cultural realities, critique systemic inequities to call for social justice, humanize political critique to emphasize collective action, reflect a complex relationship with authority to balance gratitude and critique, integrate cultural heritage with modern realities to demonstrate hybridity, and emphasize resilience and collective action to highlight community strength in the face of phenomenal trend and adversity. The poems' use of the poet's native tongue is a powerful assertion of indigenous identity in the face of dominant national and colonial languages. By writing in Bikol language, the poets reclaim their linguistic heritage, emphasizing the importance of preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages. This act of linguistic reclamation counters linguistic homogenization and reinforces the cultural identity of the *Bikolano* people, reflecting a broader commitment to cultural diversity and local identity preservation. Moreover, the *tigsik*, traditionally used for satirical or humorous commentary, is utilized to engage with contemporary concerns, thereby reinforcing communal bonds through shared cultural practices. This demonstrates the adaptability of traditional forms in addressing modern realities, underscoring the dynamic nature of cultural heritage.

The Emergent and Ambivalent Self and Other: Perception of Open Rationality

The *Bikolano* history remained debatable in the nationalist perspectives and imperialist notions of intelligibility, objectivity and subjectivity. Garcia noted, "Historical narrativity itself determines the forms of reality; it is the monolithic myth of chronological causality and objective truth that needs to be most seriously interrogated and revised in our necessarily plural histories."³⁷ As this attempt moves forward, this paper is foregrounded at the chances of liberating a local assumption as a reading strategy in a postcolonial context. Ashcroft, et. al. posited that postcolonial writing has questioned the false notions of the universal such as the assumptions about the universal features of language and value systems. Postcolonial theory has preceded from the need to address this different practice. Indigenous theories have developed to accommodate the differences within the various cultural traditions as well as the desire to describe in a comparative way the features shared across those traditions.³⁸ In this premise, modern orality and performance poetics in *tigsik* serve as critical tool which would carry out an indigenous critique in a postcolonial context. The possibility of re-reading is a continual process of subversion and appropriation which challenges the essentialist claim of Western models. The selected *tigsik* submitted for interrogation in this paper initially demonstrated the distinction of marginal discourse that despite the challenge of modernism, *tigsik* has altered the Western convention and unconsciously blend with it. The *tigsik* which is evident only with the *Bikolanos* is considered part of minor literature or text. Minor literature, as noted by Garcia is guided with Legasto's assumption - consists of minority literatures of the tribals and the country's ethnically and linguistically disfranchised like the non-*Tagalog* Christians and all the other marginalized peoples and groups in the Philippines. Garcia added, there is a need to borrow from the theorizing of our

³⁷ Garcia, J. Neil (2004). "Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics", *Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: Essays and Critiques*. Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, p. 9

³⁸ Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (1991). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London & New York: Routledge. p. 11

counterparts elsewhere in the postcolonial world, while at the same time taking exception to some of their ideas and categories, by “supplanting” them with our own. This is the key distinctions of imperially hegemonic, nationally complicit, and genuinely oppositional, which is in the nature of postcolonial discourse that as a critique to continuously engage with Western modes of representation, with its archives and Orientalist knowledge but getting cautious by the “universalizing tendencies” to refrain from simplifying what is irremediably complex situation of cultural and literary production in the diverse regions of the “Third World”, which re-institutes binarism of Self and Other.³⁹ Take note this *tigsik*:

(4) *Tigsik ko an mga suanoy na kanta,
Orog na an mga ginagamit pagharana.
Nakakabihag nin boot kan mga daraga,
Ta an mga mensahe, magagayon talaga.*⁴⁰

(*I toast for the olden songs,
Featured especially for serenades.
It captivates hearts of maidens,
For they convey beautiful messages.*)

The *tigsik* pays homage to traditional songs used in serenades, a practice that itself embodies cultural hybridity. Serenading, or “*harana*” in Filipino culture, often involves a blend of indigenous, Spanish, and later, American influences, reflecting the Philippines’ complex colonial history and its impact on local traditions. The *tigsik*, by celebrating these songs, implicitly acknowledges and preserves this hybrid cultural heritage. Moreover, the very act of using the *tigsik* form to honor another musical tradition showcases the fluidity and adaptability of cultural expressions, blending the oral poetic tradition with musical serenading practices. Also, the *tigsik* encapsulates multiplicity in several ways. First, it references the “olden songs” used in serenades, suggesting a variety of songs within this tradition, each with its unique melody, lyrics, and emotional resonance. These songs captivate the hearts of maidens and evoke the listener's personal experiences, cultural background, and the specific context in which the serenade is performed. Additionally, the *tigsik* itself, as a form of oral literature, inherently possesses multiplicity. Each performance of a *tigsik* can vary based on the performer’s delivery, the audience's reception, and the specific occasion, leading to a rich tapestry of versions and interpretations over time. *Tigsik* embodies the distilled wisdom and expression of the ages. It reveals much of the *Bikolano* character. And because there is wit in every line, there goes too some sort of transcendent power in them as they sink in the mind to settle in the heart. Banzuela commented, “there are almost always verses for the virtuous and the vain, the hopeful and the desperate, the vengeful and the forgiving, the partial and the just, the prudent and the carefree. Life is *tigsik*’s core subject, from the cradle, to the grave and beyond.”⁴¹ In an oral interview with Abdon Balde, he mentioned that “*hindi naman palaliman ng salita ang tula, kundi usapin pa rin ng hibo ng damdamin sa pamamagitan ng pagrerenda ng mga salita para makabuo ng imahe sa pagtatalinghaga.*” (Balde said, in crafting poem, it requires the texture of feeling/emotion in creating the metaphors not by the depth of words.)

Meanwhile, when a performance is recorded, whether it be musical, poetic, dramatic, or any other form, what is captured is a unique instance of that performance, influenced by specific conditions, interactions, and the immediate environment. This uniqueness underscores the fact that performances are dynamic and fluid, shaped by the performer, the audience, the setting, and the moment's specific cultural and social context. The transition from a live performance to a published transcription involves a significant transformation. A print transcription attempts to represent the original performance in a static, textual format. However, this process inevitably entails a reduction of the multidimensional nature of the

³⁹ Garcia, J. Neil (2004). “*Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics*”, *Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: Essays and Critiques*. Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, pp 6-7

⁴⁰ Note from conversation with Aida Cirujales, October 2024

⁴¹ Banzuela, Belgica & Guanzon (2011), *Tigsik of the Bikols*. Legazpi City: J&E Printing Press, p. 7

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performance. The act of recording actual performances is therefore crucial for preserving the authenticity and fullness of cultural expressions. Such recordings serve as invaluable resources for researchers, artists, and enthusiasts, offering a direct link to the “real thing” - the live performance in its unadulterated form. These recordings allow for a more nuanced analysis and appreciation of the performance, facilitating a deeper understanding of the cultural, social, and individual elements that converge in these expressive acts. In essence, while transcriptions provide a valuable means of documenting and sharing performances, it is the recordings of these live events that offer the most authentic and comprehensive insight into the dynamic art of performance.

A significant theme is the transition from the *tigsik*'s oral tradition to its contemporary variations. Originally, *tigsik* were impromptu, delivered orally, and served as a form of direct communication. The poem laments the loss of some of the form's discipline and the dilution of its metaphoric precision and thematic depth in modern renditions, which it describes as often lacking in discipline, with skewed metaphors and discordant ideas.

The *tigsik*, in its traditional form, serves as a cultural artifact, encapsulating the linguistic, rhythmic, and thematic preferences of the *Bikolano* people. By commenting on the evolution of the *tigsik*, the poem implicitly addresses broader themes of cultural change, the preservation of tradition, and the challenges of maintaining the integrity of traditional forms in the face of modernization and changing cultural practices. It couldn't be denied that this *tigsik* is both a celebration of the *tigsik* form and a critique of its contemporary iterations. It acknowledges the inherent flexibility and expressive potential of the *tigsik* while mourning the loss of its formal discipline and the dilution of its poetic potency. The *tigsik* thus serves as a call to reflect on the importance of preserving cultural and literary traditions, even as they evolve and adapt to new contexts and generations. Illustrated below is another *tigsik* to consider:

(5) *An Tigsik sa Ritwal kan Pamamalaye*

Tigsik kan tag-lalaki:

"*Tinigsik ko si Maria*

Mabini na, magayon pa

Burak бага sa lagwerta

Lumay kami kan hamot nya!"

Masimbag man an tag-babaye:

"*Tinigsik ko an bisita*

May ambisyon sa lagwerta

An sa buot na makua

Burak palan ni Maria!"⁴²

(The Toast in the Ritual of Engagement

The man toasts:

"*I raise a toast to Maria,*

Not only graceful but beautiful too,

like a flowering fruit-bearing tree in the orchard

We're enchanted by her fragrance!"

The woman toasts back:

"*I raise a toast to the suitor*

With ambitions for the orchard

Similar with the previous *tigsik*, this *tigsik* also adheres to the traditional structure of a *tigsik*, with quatrains (four-line stanzas) that typically follow a specific syllable count and rhyme scheme similar to *dalit*. Although, in this particular *tigsik*, a dialogic structure is utilized which features the voices of a man and a woman engaged in a poetic exchange as part of an engagement ritual. This format is reflective of the *tigsik*'s oral and performative roots, symbolizing the reciprocal nature of engagement and marriage through

⁴² "An Tigsik sa Ritwal kan Pamamalaye". *Tigsik Rikorida Bikolandia*

its back-and-forth structure. Moreover, this *tigsik* employs rich natural imagery to convey its messages. The man's *tigsik*, "*Tinigsik ko si Maria / Mabini na, magayon pa / Burak бага sa lagwerta / Lumay kami kan hamot nya!*" uses the metaphor of Maria as a beautiful, fragrant flower in a garden, highlighting her desirability not just for her physical beauty but for her nurturing and life-sustaining qualities, akin to a "flowering fruit-bearing tree in the orchard." The woman's response, "*Tinigsik ko an bisita / May ambisyon sa lagwerta / An sa buot na makua / Burak palan ni Maria!*" acknowledges the suitor's ambitions but emphasizes the personal connection and love represented by Maria as the "flower" he wishes to possess in his heart. This exchange underlines the importance of personal virtues and mutual attraction in matrimonial alliances. With this, the poetic exchange reflects the traditional *Bikolano* courtship rituals where expressions of respect and admiration are made through poetic toasts, highlighting the significance of consent and mutual affection in marriage. The inclusion of the woman's voice in this exchange is particularly noteworthy, signifying her active role and agency in the matrimonial decision-making process. Truly, this encapsulates the *Bikolano* tradition of utilizing *tigsik* for articulating complex social customs and emotional states within the framework of engagement and marriage. Through its dialogic structure and vivid imagery, the *tigsik* reveals the intricate interplay between individual desires and cultural expectations, and offers a window into the gender dynamics and courtship practices of *Bikolano* society.

The *Bikolanos* have rich and diverse philosophies exercised and observed by the elders, and some are transcended to the contemporaries to ponder and discern such as the discourse of *orag* (wit) and *dunong* (wisdom). These are also considered as *Bikolanos'* philosophies. These discourses are reflective forms of thinking and an act of discernment in coming to profound decision or action. These cognitive intuitions are also manifested during *tigsikan* when poets contemplate (*naghurophuop*) the issue before they interpellate to *tigsikan*. Ibana (2001)⁴³ notes that language does have an effect on the depth of thinking. It is the natural embodiment of human ideas. The *Bikol* languages have, in fact, a lot of Hispanic roots that have been enculturated and adapted for our own purposes. One of languages' enculturation is brought by rapid technological advances. It transforms oral tradition to print then digital platforms and allows diverse philosophies to emerge. Such is the fate of a living tongue, a cognitive discourse and intuition that are strengthened to emulate emerging ideals and philosophy. The notion of intuition covers many philosophical connotations. Philosophers of different epochs have their own understanding of intuition. Jacques Maritain (1952)⁴⁴ is one among them. Maritain understands intuition as "the intellectual perception of the inexhaustible and incomprehensible reality thus manifested as the object of this perception". As an intellectual perception, intuition is an internal experience. Intuition is a very simple sight of the intellect that is above any rational analysis and demonstration. It does not involve any deductive and inductive procedures nor logical construction. Maritain considers intuition as primary fact, the primordial experience of the mind in an immediate and non-conceptual manner. The notion of intuition remains vague and debatable however, when it speaks as being or essence (intelligible idea or ultimate object of the intellect), it implies the intuition of its transcendental characters and analogical values. Thus, whenever there is the confrontation between the mind and its formal objects being (idea), cognitive intuition occurs.

The notion of open rationality is the ability of the Bikolano to think and reason out with intellectual wit in a quick and brief period of time in tigsikan or tirigsikan. Paghurophuop (contemplation) is displayed

⁴³ Ibana, Rainier RA. (2001). "Towards a Bikolano Philosophical Research Program". *Hingowa: The Holy Rosary Seminary Journal* vol 2 no.1 p. 29

⁴⁴ Jacques Maritain, Preface to *Metaphysics*, (USA, New American Library, 1952) in Philip Francis Bersabe (1998). "Maritain's Notion of Intuition as the Foundation of his Metaphysics", *Hingowa: The Holy Rosary Seminary Journal* vol 2 no.1, pp. 29-31. (Returning to intuition as the fundamental root of metaphysics, Maritain conveys to the modern man, affected much by positivism, the existential character of metaphysics. His, then, is not mere rival but of the establishment of the validity of metaphysics through intuition. One of the enigmas that confront man is the reality of knowledge. When mind acquires the knowledge of things, he attains it through concepts and ideas. The mind accumulates ideas that become reservoir of knowledge. However, when the mind seeks for the knowledge of being itself, it involves a higher or even the highest of all mental processes, namely, intuition.)

during the poet's extemporaneous performance in *tigsikan*. And in within the verbal chanting or interpellation is the presence of cognitive intuition, how the *paratigsik* delivers or counters the *tigsikan*. Serra and Banares in *Mga Ehersisyo Espiritwal* by Fr. Wilmer Joseph Tria (2015)⁴⁵ argues on *hulit dapit sa paghurophurop*, (prayer to meditation) a cognitive intuition likened to a prayer when the poet pauses and discerns for the topic. Serra and Banares recalled that *paghurophurop* (contemplation) is transcendently elevated through the invocation of the Divine, that unveils the theodical disposition that resonates within the hearts of the *Bikolanos* - their deep and profound unity with the Divine that has significant Augustinian influence. Tria noted, "an *paghurophurop*, na *nginangaranan* man na *pamibi nin puso*, *urog kan pangadyi*, na *nginangaranan* *pamibi nin puso*, *kaipuhan na gibuhon nin tawong-Kristiyano na buot magdanay sa grasya nin Dyos*, na *iyong ikinabubuhay nin kalag*. *Sinasabi ni Santo Tomas de Aquino na sa paghurophurop*, *namimidmid nin tawo an tunay na paglingkod sa Kagurangnan tang Dyos*." (... a contemplation which is guided by praise of heart, much by prayer, prayed to be fulfilled by Christian to receive the grace of God, that makes the soul live. St. Thomas Aquinas once noted that in a profound contemplation, the people recognizes to serving God). This is a cognitive intuition that serves as the inner compass of the persona. His sense of awareness has been heightened that allows him to perceive the world beyond its superficial layers. Through brief contemplation like in *tigsik*, the persona feels synchronicities and profound ideas from the universe. It seems that his smart intelligence works, enabling him to perceive the realities because he can discern the configurations of metaphors and metonymies in an instance. He has that peculiar sensation of being rational to things and has a unique perspective on life. The *paratigsik* recognizes the divine essence, being and the belief of connectedness to the realities of life.

CONCLUSION:

Archiving *tigsik* from the digital platforms envisions to see whether the indigenous literary and its form have been preserved over years or has evolved into an appropriation and abrogation. The *tigsik*, as a product of culture needs interrogation with neocolonialism, there is the need for a literary study that would highlight cultural identity in the midst of the various hybridities at play in contemporary literature. The themes in *tigsik* are closely interwoven because each *tigsik* posits parallel postcolonial symptoms from modern orality, millennial metaphor, performance poetics and structured conservatism. Each *tigsik* articulates the hybrid nature of *paratigsik* and the *tirigsikan*, which at the same time recreating the old into an emerging form. Considering Bhabha's notion on ambivalence, hybridity and appropriation, the *paratigsik* meditates and establishes at the end, the perception of open rationality by adapting between Self and Other. It evacuates and maintains the Self as the site of meditation and autonomy and creates a mark of modernity, which maintains the fusion of Self and Other.

The *tigsik* has been a significant part of the *Bikolanos* literary landscape, whether performed or written. This literary form has been utilized in various ways to offer a toast (*pag-omaw*), throw a candid remark (*borobentot*), disclose criticism (*patuyaw*), or share a *Bikol* humor (*pakunsuelo*) in constructing different aspects of lived life, depicting the noted olden customs and traditions with the emerging norms brought by modernism and technology. The selected *tigsik* has been shaped with some influences from postcolonialism by Homi Bhabha which is an appropriation from various postcolonial authorities like of Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Walter Ong and Mikhael Bakhtin as seen from the various *tigsiks* by *tigsik* masters Abdon Balde and Aida Cirujales, and *tigsik* enthusiasts (teachers, students, and the like). The nuances and influences, which are undeniably postcolonial, are evident from the *tigsiks*'s philosophy of *orag* (wit) and *dunong* (wisdom) has explored the perception of open rationality of the *Bikolanos* through the notion of *paghurophurop*, vis-a-vis the *Bikolnons* have tried to retain his indigenous identity with Virgilio Almario's nativist-structuralist assumption as seen for example, in the the *tigsik*'s structure, form and tradition of noted Bikolano culture, but charted an identity of I and Other. The *tigsik* in vernacular now moving to transformation seems to be preoccupied with different realities such as the loss of traditional values, familial ties, hybrid education, health scare, political dynasties, divergent economy and the like are just some of the few postcolonial configurations emerged from the texts. Moreover, this *tigsik* collection constitutes an important representation for the *Bikol* cultural studies and literature that has through the decades assumed a multitude of functions in the lives of the *Bikolanos* and Filipinos in general. Finally, the *tigsik* as performance poetry expresses various shades of cultural experiences, which reveals

⁴⁵ Fr. Tria, Wilmer Joseph S. (2015). *Mga Ehersisyo Espiritwal sa Tataramon na Bikol*. Naga City: Ateneo de Naga University Press, p. 15

various forms of transformation. These transformations exist in cultures which appear to be quite similar in all countries with colonization history. For in one sense any literary forms are cross-cultural interrelated because it negotiates a gap between worlds, a gap in which the simultaneous processes of abrogation and appropriation continually strive to define and determine ones' practice. This particular literary form is therefore always presented out of the tension between the abrogation of mainstream language which speaks from the Center, and the act of appropriation which brings it under the influence of vernacular tongue, the complex of speech habits which characterizes the local language establishes its link in the currency of time. Thus, "without the process of appropriation, the moment of abrogation may not extend beyond the reversal of the assumptions of privilege, the "normal", and a correct inscription, all of which can be simply taken over and maintained by the new usage."⁴⁶

The *paratigsik* (*Bikol* poet), does not only tell realities of life either in witty remarks, riddles or in a straight forward statement but also articulates the sensibility which is very much a *Bikolano* culture. Each *tigsik* is shaped by the *paratigsik*'s style and contemplation. Balde articulates: we have been telling life through *tigsik* for a long time, some follow the tradition some are just mere *rawitdawit*, but all of these are the *Bikolano*'s consciousness that show power, subjugation and transformation.⁴⁷ The *tigsik* works with this concept of Self and Other because it theorizes the *paratigtik*'s practice. The *paratigsik* does not only chants his *tigsik* in a spur of time for compliance but meditate on how his *tigsik* would outsmart the interpellation. This theorization leads to how the *paratigsik* appropriated the language. The *paratigsik* articulates through his *tigsik* that the *Bikol* language does not only approximates the need to express himself but what matters most is the multiple meaning embedded to the verse lines interpellated by the *paratigsik*. This act is associated to cognitive intuition like *paghurophurop* in performing *tigsik*. The *tigsik* by the *Bikolano* may serve as a conduit in foregrounding the once colonized sensibility, literature and poetics. The poem posits the possibilities for the subalterns to speak and be heard in the attempt to maintain the indigenous practice despite of their received Western consciousness and influence of modernity. Homi Bhabha and Virgilio Almario agree that appropriation and hybridization may reconstruct the disavowed sensibilities and reinvent the colonial memory and consciousness of the once colonized subject. Almario added, "*ang pag gunita ay dapat nalalahukan ng matalas na pagmamasid at pagpapahalaga sa katutubo at hindi sa dayuhan ... upang maganap ito, kailangang harapin ng bawat persona ang mahigpit na engkuwentro sa loob ng guniguni*".⁴⁸ (the poet must have a keen observation and consideration to Self not to the Other, and he needs to face the struggle in his national consciousness.) However, Almario argues that he is not totally disclaiming the Western influence but there is a need to position in priority the indigenous characteristics in interrogating the Self and Other. In this recreation of the indigenous, Bhabha implies that cultural identity is an open-ended construct which invites the notion of plurality and/or negates western universality. Cultural identity is fluid and is in a constant state of being created and recreated through the process of continuous negotiations, which takes place in what Bhabha calls Third Space⁴⁹. Bhabha's Third Space and the notion of the beyond in a modern world may offer space for the formerly colonized subject to set a direction for themselves. With the social and cultural interaction via social media networks within the framework of modernization, it has created a strategic space of liberating indigenous cultural identity, poetics and philosophy. Thus, in the context of Filipino poetry (*panulaang Filipino*), "we must look at our local poetry as constituting various forms of native reaction to the colonial project. Almario recalls his *Ang Bagong Pormalismong Filipino* (New Formalism), a method of reading - and crucially, writing - Filipino poems, an approach interested in illuminating the traditions in Philippine literature - traditions that can lead the critic to the discovery of a unique and sovereign Filipino Self. At the very least would result in a broadening of the national memory as well as the propagation and strengthening of the national language".⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (1991). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London & New York: Routledge. p.38

⁴⁷ Note from conversation with Abdon Balde in Cagsawa Cultural Festival, February 2024

⁴⁸ Almario, Virgilio (2006). *Pag-unawa sa ating Pagtula: Pagsusuri at Kasaysayan ng Panulaang Filipino*. Manila: Anvil Publishing, Inc. p. 34

⁴⁹ Bhabha, Homi (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge

⁵⁰ For this discussion on Balagtasismo and Modernismo, see: Virgilio S. Almario, "Pasakalye," "Balagtasismo versus Modernismo: Panulaang Tagalog sa Ika-20 Siglo (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1984), 1-36 in J. Neil Gracia (2004). *Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics: Essays and Critiques* (Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press), 17-18.

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