

## *The Ingenuity of Kapampangan Novels in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

Loida L. Garcia, University of Santo Tomas,  
Bataan Peninsula State University, Philippines

The Asian Conference on Literature, Librarianship & Archival Science 2016  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

The inquiry is a breakthrough attempt to initiate an investigation on Kapampangan novels that have flourished in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century after more than three centuries of Spanish conquest and during the early part of the American occupation. The province of Pampanga which has been inaugurated by Spain in 1571 has recorded multiple revolts against the foreign rule and its people have continued to express their revulsion up to the American invasion which led to a bloody loss of lives. In spite of the varied political, social, economic and cultural struggles, the early Kapampangan playwright-revolutionists have succeeded to leave a literary legacy for public scrutiny and this includes the elusive novel genre. Apparently, these writings have somehow been used as a forum for the people's sentiments and perceptions during that time which explain their prevalent cultural situations. The century old extant novels which have been made available either in holographs, typescripts and microfilms rightfully warrant an analysis for the literary ingenuity that the early vernacular writers have produced. It is the goal of the research to disclose the distinct ingenuity of the Kapampangan novels, longed to be explored for a century, and have been a product of a helpless subjugation on the hands of dual world powers.

Keywords: ingenuity, kapampangan novels, Spanish conquest, American invasion, holographs, microfilms

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum

[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction and Rationale of the Study**

The province of Pampanga has been inaugurated by Spain in 1571 shortly after the conquerors have discovered the vast and fertile land that comprise the province and subsequently exploited its boundaries to suit their motives. Larkin, in his *The Pampangans* (1972) had cited that various sections of Pampanga were subtracted and incorporated into the provinces of Bulacan, Nueve Ecija, Bataan, Tarlac and Zambales. In spite of the setbacks, the Kapampangans never ceased to speak in their native language and this distinguished them from other cultural groups. Castro (1981) has cited that up to now Kapampangan is spoken as far west as Dinalupihan, Bataan, and south in Calumpit and San Miguel de Mayuyo in Bulacan. Larkins further expressed that language alone endowed Kapampangans with a unique identity and centuries of interaction gave them a sense of group solidarity.

The loyalty for the Kapampangan language has persisted and transported in literature. Lacson (1984) has outlined the Kapampangan literary legacy starting with the cycle of legends to Sinukwan, followed by the folksongs and verses which were classified as basulto, goso, pamuri, pang-obra, paninta, karagatan, duplo, sapatya and diparan. The list goes further to the vernacular religious literature like the pasion, prayers and incantations, the kumidya, the zarzuela which served as an intellectual rebellion against the Spanish for its use of the local setting and characters, the early novels, short stories and lyric poetry. All these were written in the vernacular language deeply cherished by the native of Pampanga. It is remarkable that the latest novel genre has flourished in the first two decades of the 20th century right after the United States had bought the Philippines from the three-century rule of the Spaniards. The dual powers that have invaded the country had sparked the suppressed fury of the nation and the playwrights had found a forum in their writings to express their call for sovereignty.

Likewise from their sense of solidarity the Kapampangans had recorded numerous major revolts in an attempt to liberate themselves and the whole nation from the colonial powers. Castro (1981) listed that the earliest documented rebellion was in 1571, soon after the investiture of Pampanga as a province. A second followed in 1585, then exploded again in 1645 and was followed by the much-reported uprising of 1660-1661 under Francisco Maniago. Another revolt was mounted in 1665 in which together with other Filipinos, the Kapampangans fought relentlessly on the Great Revolution of 1896-1898.

Of the 1660-1661 revolt, Blair and Roberson, editors and annotators of *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, devoted a whole chapter in their book titled *The Insurrection by Filipinos*, to Pampango revolts against the Spaniards. About the Kapampangans, they reported that “they are the most warlike and prominent people of these islands and the first to decide to free themselves from the government...”. They further stated that the Pampangos were determined to break the bonds of subjection and throw off the yoke of the Spanish dominion and they carried out that resolve with valor.

On the account of the revolt against the new colonial power, the United States, Castro (1981) has further recounted that many Pampango writers participated in the revolution and these include two of the most legendary novelists Juan Crisostomo Soto (1867-1918) and Aurelio Tolentino (1867-1915) who were contemporaries. Aguas (1963) has attested in his study that Soto was in the battlefield as a ‘Katipunero’ (freedom fighter) and was promoted as captain after he survived the war.

The playwright has been imprisoned and spent his time composing poems and plays in jail. He was also sentenced to face the firing squad when his daughter was only eight years old. He did not relent on his goal for after his release from prison, Soto became a reporter of *La Independencia*, the most influential newspaper of the revolution founded by Antonio Luna. His experiences as a revolutionist and a newspaperman greatly influenced his works as a writer. As the author of the first novel in Kapampangan, the prominent *Lidia*, highly-praised for its value, the life of Soto is full of references to the Philippine Revolution.

Aurelio Tolentino, most remembered as the Kapampangan guerilla writer who was jailed nine times in his life has seen the agony being under the colonial rule. Manlapaz (1975) accounted that Tolentino was captured and imprisoned during the outbreak of the Revolution of 1896 but he still continued his revolutionary activities. His signature was imprinted on the Declaration of Philippine Independence at Kawit on June 12, 1898. The literary works of Tolentino greatly exhibit his sentiments as a militant nationalist. Being a journalist, he persisted in advocating for liberty by writing signed editorials openly critical of the United States. He was the editor of *La Patria* and *El Liberal*, the newspapers that were suppressed by government authorities. He was in and out of prison because of his writings and his call extends to his works and novels. All his extant novels are flowing with both direct and subtle undertones that readers easily understand.

The much younger Kapampangan novelist Zoilo Galang (1895- ?) has not seen the battlefield of the freedom fighters yet in his own distinct ways had imposed himself next to the earlier Kapampangan literary champions. The Kapampangan blogger A. Castro disclosed that Galang went to Manila to study at the Escuela de Derecho, the country's eminent law school where he graduated in 1919. He learned typing and stenography in English and Spanish all by himself. Attracted to the English language, he took special courses at the University of the Philippines in 1925 and went to Columbia University for further studies in Literature. Galang has been a product of both the Spanish and American cultural influences and was able to provide his contribution as a nationalist on his Kapampangan and English works.

Vidal (1991) on her translation of Galang's vernacular novel *Ing Capalaran (The Fate)* has stated that the author is first known as the first novelist in English when he produced *A Child of Sorrow* in 1921. Galang was a distinguished book editor, a historian, a biographer, a fictionist, and a nationalist as proven by his collection of legends and folktales in his *Tales of the Philippines* in 1921 as well as his collections of essays in his *Life and Success*, published on the same year. All these along with his collection of short stories, 'The Box of Ashes' published in 1924 would place him on the same level with prominent Kapampangan writers. He was also responsible for the publication of the 20-volume *Philippine Encyclopedia* in 1957 and Vidal (1991) recorded his latest publication in 1960 on the translation in Tagalog of his novel *Child of Sorrow* into *Anak Dalita*. As a vernacular novelist, Galang's novel *Ing Capalaran* has stood out to be translated in Filipino and his fiction speaks of the distinct characteristics of the early Kapampangan novels that he had willingly adopted.

History attests that the province of Pampanga has grieved under the Spanish rule for three centuries and fought hopelessly for freedom yet the liberators that fulfilled its desire had once again controlled their resistance. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the new colonial lords had imposed drastic political and social changes by creating new

programs and institutions among the colonized. Larkins (1972) expressed that maintaining the Philippines as an American colony meant freeing the Islands from the reputedly retarding hold of Spanish Catholicism, epitomized by the Spanish friars. The improved condition of the country would prove to be lucrative on the interest of US commercialism at the expense of the colonized country.

From the foregoing account, the outstanding Kapampangan novelists and their works have lived in dual cultural influences that have made a great impact in their personal lives and professional careers. The deeply-rooted three hundred years of Hispanic influences have become inevitably conditioned ways of life, yet in a short span of residency, the American and western culture persevered in displacing them. An analysis of the novels that significantly flourished in this context would reveal the cultural conditions and unfold a distinct new literary genre that these vernacular novelists had pioneered.

### **Material and Methods**

The paper is focused on the extant and available Kapampangan novels written by vernacular writers after Spain was subjugated by the United States. The novels were published between 1907-1921 which have been read and patronized during the American occupation. The texts were written originally in Kapampangan and some have been translated to Tagalog to cater to a wider audience and these became available either in holographs, typescripts or microfilms.

The following is the list of the investigated novels : *Lidia (Lydia)* -1907 by Juan Crisostomo Soto (1867-1918), *Ang Buhok ni Ester (Esther's Strand of Hair)* –Three Parts -1911-1915 by Aurelio Tolentino (1867-1915), *Maring:Dangal at Buhay (Maring: Honor and Strength)*-1913 by Aurelio Tolentino, *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)*-1913, *Kasulatang Ginto (Golden Scripture)*-1914 by Aurelio Tolentino, and *Ang Kapalaran (The Fate)*- Two Parts-1921 by Zoilo Galang (1895-?).

The main intention of the study is to reveal the ingenuity of the century old Kapampangan novels authored by vernacular playwrights. In order to serve the purpose, the connected theories on New Historicism and Cultural Materialism were adopted to examine the narratives.

As expressed by Ryan on his 'Introduction' to *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (1996), the new historicists led by Stephen Greenblatt insist on situating the texts back to its initial context. He further stated that their aim is "to dethrone and demystify the privilege of literary work, to destroy its immunity to infection by circumstances and to rob it of political innocence by exposing its discreet commitments, its subtle collusions in the cultural struggle for power."

The Kapampangan novels as products of dual world powers are seen as embracing the various cultural contexts that are worth the inquiry using the new historicists approach. As the early novels have been published on a critical period of the country's history, these fictions have been a product of that time along with the colonial circumstances that the authors were confined. The novels are regarded as cultural constructs and they will be explored through the use of the new historicism and cultural materialism theories that both relate literature to history, to treat texts as

indivisible from contexts, and to do so from a politically charged perspective forged in the present (Ryan,1996).

The theory of cultural materialism stresses the vital role of culture as a social process which actively fashions different ways of life. Cultural materialism which has been coined by Raymond Williams (1958) states that "a culture is a whole way of life, and the arts are part of a social organization which economic change clearly radically effects". He further stressed in his essay on *Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory* (1980) that "the arts of writing and the arts of creation and performance are parts of the cultural process in all the different ways and different sectors." The present study on the early novels is likely to conjure its contributions to the dominant culture that the novelists want to directly and implicitly reveal. The representations and images that are reflected in the fictions could mirror the sentiments and pressures faced by the people in varied social and political circumstances.

Clifford Geertz on his classic collection of essays on anthropology *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) has stated:

Culture provides the link between what men are intrinsically capable of becoming and what they actually become. We become individual under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point and direction to our lives.

Geertz, the renowned anthropologist who vastly inspired the theories of new historicism in the US and cultural materialism in Britain, had further theorized that "there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture". For him, everything about man, his ideas, values, even emotions are cultural products that are manufactured out of tendencies, capacities and dispositions that are innate yet manufactured.; hence men are better grasped as 'cultural artifacts' whose significance is to be found inscribed in local circumstance and concrete detail (Ryan,1996).

Then again, the renowned Filipino literary critic Soledad Reyes has bluntly stated in her book '*Kritisismo*' (1992), that with the present situation of the theory and criticism in the Philippines, it is only the theory of New Historicism which could provide on the kind of help and contribution that it needs. She further affirmed her stand by citing three reasons:

1. *Ang Bagong Historisismo ang tanging pananaw na nagsasaalang-alang sa kahalagahan ng kulturang popular.* (It is only the concept of New Historicism that takes into consideration the significance of popular culture)
2. *Dito rin matatagpuan ang pagpapahalaga sa mga tekstong hindi naisulat ayon sa hinihingi ng Formalismo at Realismo.* (It is in New Historicism that texts that fail to meet the standards of Formalism and Realism are appreciated).
3. *Ang pagdidiin ng teorya ng Bagong Historisismo sa kahalagahan ng kasaysayan, hindi bilang pasibong konteksto kundi isang aktibong diskurso,-ay isang kaisipang makatutulong sa paglilinang ng historikal na pananaw sa kritisismo.* (The thrust of New Historicism on the significance of history not as a passive context

but an active discourse-is an insight that helps in the development of the historical perspective in literary criticism).

The first reason stated above aptly calls for attention on non-canonical texts that new historicists take into considerations. They think that it is wrong to draw a line between the canonical and non-canonical texts since they assume that all texts are part of history and excluding some manuscripts through the use of the present-day standards may fail to give justice to the texts. The existing and available Kapampangan novels did not undergo any canonical process during their time and may not meet the approval of the current literature experts but they are undoubtedly part of the socio-cultural aspects of the Kapampangans and the Filipinos in general. They have been written and have continued to exist because of being popular and this attests to their historical contributions which make them interesting subjects for scrutiny.

The Kapampangan extant novels written and published from 1907-1921 apparently are not guided by the growing popularity of the western theories of Realism and Formalism. The biographical accounts of the writers do not provide for their foreign education on literary theories and it is just appropriate that their works are examined based on the cultural backgrounds of the texts for readers to better understand them. This provides a clear angle on the authors' perspective and awareness of the varied forces in their time.

Reyes (1992) has likewise stressed the importance of new historicism to strengthen the significance of the historical side of literary manuscripts. "New historicism assumes that every work is a product of the historic moment that created it and holds that we are hopelessly subjective interpreters of what we observe." (Brizee et.al,2012). In employing the new historicism theory, the novels are scrutinized through their historical and socio-cultural contexts by probing into their backgrounds and also the writers who produced them. This theory exposes how the manuscripts portray their existing situations and how the authors regard and critique the conditions of their time.

The contextual and cultural pieces of evidences that embody the texts are clearly indispensable to go into a thorough study of the 20<sup>th</sup> century vernacular novels. Greenblatt (1989) as cited by Bertens (2001) had detailed that "The work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class or creators equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions and the institutions and practices of society." The early fictions then, are manifestations of the social, economic, political and cultural-historical conditions that controlled during those times. The authors are consequently molded or trapped in the context that governed their situations.

## **Results and Discussion**

This paper attempted to divulge the ingenuity of the novels in the province of Pampanga which were authored by vernacular novelists and published in 1907-1921; the period of American occupation in the Philippines a few years after the United States subdued the three century rule of Spain.

The examination which was anchored on the theory of new historicism/ cultural materialism unfolded that the Kapampangan novels are products of their time and had

depicted the contexts to which they were written and published. Two of the three novelists had personally fought in the bloody revolutions that aimed for freedom from the oppressors and their novels served as avenues to express their sentiments and nationalism.

Juan Crisostomo Soto and Aurelio Tolentino's contributions in the battlefield as *guerillas* are long-hailed by the Kapampangans as proven by the monuments erected on their behalf. Their post-war combat continued through their pens under the new colonial masters, the Americans. Both Soto and Tolentino are considered as the most prolific Kapampangan writers and their works are often the most preferred when it comes to choosing the most distinguished literary works. It is remarkable that both of them were born in 1867, January 27 for Soto and Tolentino on October 13. They passed away both in the month of July; July 12, 1918 for Soto and July 5, 1915 for Tolentino. Both of these playwrights worked in the government offices because of their impressive educational backgrounds so they have seen the new policies implemented by the Americans. They became editors, journalists, fiction writers, poets, playwrights and both of them sought their writings to convey nationalism to the readers.

Their legacy was sustained by the much younger Zoilo Galang, who, like Tolentino has also studied Law. He was born on June 27, 1895, a few years prior to the overthrow of Spain by the US. Galang had used his education to prove the worth of Kapampangans and the Filipinos as independent beings worthy of liberation that the new master has finally awarded. Galang's patriotism was not only on the literary field but likewise on the intellectual arena when he had gifted his country the Encyclopedia of the Philippines, that he himself edited and wrote entries for the book set which covered Philippine literature, biography, commerce and industry, art, education, religion, government, science, history and builders of the new Philippines. The Encyclopedia of the Philippines came with a general information and index. (Castro, A., 2009).

From the given contexts and the examination of the century old Kapampangan novels, the following attributes speak of their own ingenuity:

### **Innovative Vernacular Novels**

Manlapaz (1981), on her survey and anthology of Kapampangan literature, conveyed that the Kapampangan writers didn't make a formal distinction among the types of prose narratives as they refer to tales, short stories and novels by the common term 'salita' (word) and that the distinction on the genre lies on the length of the works. From this fact, it could be surmised that the novels were categorized by the early writers as such because of their length and structure, being longer than short stories and the structure composed of parts or chapters. Writers were able to find enthusiastic readers who had popularized their novels because of their innovations.

Soto's *Lidia*, published in 1911, marks a total disregard from the Spanish *corrido* and romantic metrical romance that have long influenced the literary landscape in which the readers lived in illusion and fantasies. *Lidia* piloted the first Kapampangan novel that centered on real life situations where the characters are familiar people and the setting and events took place in actual scenarios. On his *Foreword*, the author claimed that Lidia was a real living character and that a little more clue might reveal her true personality. Manlapaz further holds that the novel was the first prose narrative of its

kind so it was a new feature of modernity. The novel was considered by scholars as a local gothic fiction which was a far cry from the usual romances and religious writings encouraged by the Spanish. Lidia and Hector's love affair ended tragically when the latter, hopeless for a reconciliation, poisoned himself. The manner of the discovery of Oscar's death inside a closed pharmacy stemmed from the journalistic style of Soto when writing in the newspapers as it was presented in a logical and credible way. Soto's novel initiated the authorial intervention in the story as the author's voice consistently appeared in the structure of the novel. His authority was imposed that he delivered his own opinions, talked freely with the characters, explained the situations unknown to the characters and got personally involved to the events so as to present the Kapampangan culture the way it was.

Tolentino's three-part *Ing Buak Nang Ester* (Ester's Hairstrand) published in 1911 and 1915 was another trendsetter in the vernacular novel. Lacson (1984) observed that the novel introduced the detective narrative to Kapampangan literature and that in craftsmanship and event structure, the novel ranks among the best. The plot and structure of the story gave a new element to the usual verse narratives where the characters relied on the divine intervention for their happiness. The dual love stories of Ruben and Gloria and Ester and Oscar had posed a marked difference on the fiction. Long before the theory of western feminism has been observed, Tolentino has highlighted the exceptional modern women on the characters of Gloria and Ester likewise Juaning on their battle for dignity and justice. Gloria fought physically to ward off the advances of the villain Gerardo and worked cunningly to defend her case in court. Ester used her intellect to find answers to the puzzle-like problem that her brother Ruben was accused of. The minor character of Juaning stood firm until her death to fight for her cause and saved Gloria. On a deeper analysis, this great portrayal of women represents love for the motherland that the author subtly inculcated in his novels.

The 1921 novel of Zoilo Galang *Ing Capalaran* (The Fate), the author adopted the Kapampangan tradition of novel writing. He confined his characters in the local settings; the popular places of Pampanga like Culiati (Angeles), Porac, San Fernando, Wawa (Guagua), the train stations and went farthest as in Manila. He also used the most anticipated occasions on his trend of events like the fiesta gatherings, processions, stage plays, the picnics for single men and women, and the process of courtship. Galang has been influenced by the success of the prior novels that he had also made his novels into two parts that in order to create suspense to his readers and for them to look forward on his next novel. Vidal (1991), in her study of Galang and his novel *Ing Capalaran* had implied that the author's use of language differentiates him from his counterparts. The author used Spanish and English proverbs and mixed idioms of both Tagalog and Kapampangan languages also slang and colloquial words. It was experimentation on his part probably because of his proficiency in four languages considering that he was educated under the American patronage. He also made use of a character that acted like a 'philosopher' in order to weave his turn of events.

The Kapampanganness of the innovative early novels are patterned on the novelists' own distinction of their work as a novel, outside the boundaries of the western standards, the use of real life situations and familiar personalities, the inclusion of local settings and events, the use of the Spanish and Kapampangan languages, the

author acting as the omniscient narrator, and the personal involvement of the authors in their narratives are novelties that were initiated in the vernacular literature.

**Patriotic Novels-** Soto, Tolentino and Galang share the same character of nationalism as they were products of two colonial world powers during their lifetime. Their novels are embossed with the underlying rebellion to the colonial powers that they have personally bore and their readers recognize even the disguised message that their novels express. They are most remembered primarily because of their contribution to the country as writers, newspapermen, editors, revolutionists, and freedom-advocates whose sentiments were freely embossed on their novels.

The first and only novel of Soto, *Lidia* (1907) which at the onset seems like a usual love story, talked about the cockfighting in the country as permitted by the government. He pointed it further by the fact that there were more places in cockfighting than schools for education and that in that particular vice of hell, both the poor and the wealthy are equal and both will go to the punishment of hell. The cockfighting business pays two hundred pesos annually to the authorities and the authorial intervention set in and stated that no one can do anything about that. This event was not unknown to Soto because his father was the town *alguacil mayor* (sheriff) for a number of years and he himself was in the government service as a clerk in 1884, as an official *encargado del orden public* (in-charge of law and order), as an *alcalde primero* (first mayor) of Bacolor and went back as a deputy assessor of Pampanga in 1913. (Aguas,1963) As a patriot, he had wanted his *cabalen* (townmates) to refrain from vices and to realize the ill effects of these in their lives, this observance on vices also manifested on Tolentino's works. Soto's fictions usually talks of the greatness of heroes during the revolution and a call for nationalism.

The works of Tolentino are expressions of his sense of patriotism. His plays, zarzuelas and novels are indicators of his need to fight for independence and his experiences as a public servant greatly motivated him to persist in his cause. Manlapaz (1975) has revealed that during his lifetime, the playwright has experienced nine imprisonments and that his militant nationalism persisted throughout the American regime, using his writings to deliver his message. His widely-acclaimed play *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas* (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow) that was staged in 1903 has sparked the wrath of Americans and had him arrested and charged with sedition, sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined \$2,000. In 1911, Gov. Gen. Forbes granted Tolentino full executive order and interestingly, the author has decided to turn his play with the same title into a novel which he published in 1913.

The novel contains the bluntly drawn character of the United States as *Haring Samuel* (U.S) who had betrayed and killed his old friend *Raha Lakhang Bayan* (Philippines) and had taken as hostages the wife and daughter of the Raha named *Kalayaan* (Freedom) and *Mithi* (Wish). The novel is filled with details on how Haring Samuel has used his power to overthrow the Raha's enemy (Spain) yet came back disguised as a friend but with an evil motive to kill the Raha and take over the land. Anyone who reads the novel will feel antagonism towards the new colonial masters and develop patriotism on the treachery that the new oppressors had devised. The novel portrays that love for the motherland and remaining faithful to her in spite of all the offer of progress by the oppressor may result in victory. In the novel, *Kalayaan* and *Mithi* were not enticed by the power offered to them and the *Raha* resurrected to life which prompted *Haring Samuel* to liberate the land.

*Kasulatang Ginto* (Golden Scripture), published most probably in 1913 as inferred from the book publications of Tolentino, followed the same nationalistic call for Filipinos. The novel, just like its predecessor was written in both Kapampangan and Tagalog languages to involve a bigger audience. The symbolism used by the author easily points to his aim of unity to attain independence. The characters of *Lakhang Liwayway*, the widow of the great king *Lakhang Punsalan*, and the present king of the other kingdom *Lakhang Makapagal*, were portrayed to call attention to the blessings and prosperity that the kingdom may gain if they become united and pursue the same goals. The animosity between the two kingdoms was resolved by the golden scripture in order to secure peace in the divided territories and thereby attain true liberty. The character of *Bagong Araw* (new day) clearly depicts the perceived hope that someday all the disputes in the land will be settled favorably and this shall take effect when he marries *Tatlong Bituin* (three stars), that symbolizes the three major islands of the country.

Galang's novel *Ing Capalaralan*, supposedly a love story centers on the parent's objection to the affair, widely calls for people to patronize what is Filipino, and read the works of local authors no matter what language it was written. The author would use the musings of the character of Conrado to observe the people in the community and think what would become of them. He would pensively utter his hope for the future that his motherland would not be the land of slaves, of illiterates, of impoverished, but a land of educated, hardworking and progressive people. The two-part novel in which the author used a narrator to disclose the story of Luzing who fell in love with Conrado in spite of her mother's objections managed to use the fiction as means for nationalism. On Conrado's court trial where he was found guilty of robbery, the author assaulted the justice system of the government; that justice belongs to the rich and powerful not to the common people who deserve it. He hopes for the time that Filipinas will have its freedom as fought in battle by the *Katipuneros* (revolutionists).

### **Didactic Novels**

The author serves as a commentator, a preacher, a moralist, a guidance counselor, to teach readers on ways of life. The Spanish influences on literature when they had disseminated religious pamphlets and readings had been instilled and carried out by the novelists. Their novels are embossed with their moral standards that they wanted readers to adopt. The authors felt that as writers they had the right and responsibility to teach their readers moral values that they need in their lives.

Aurelio Tolentino's *Maring: Dangal at Buhay* was subtitled as *Ulirang Buhay Tagalog* (Ideal Tagalog Life) in which the novelist had presented a woman so strong in character that her greatness surfaced from her moral standards. From his Preface, the author started his counsel by writing that a person who only fills his stomach is not living; just sprouting like a blade of grass. In order to be human is to fill the heart and the mind, through reading good books. The character of Maring is an exemplary model of virtues as dispersed by the author. The woman had suffered so much when she was abducted by her rejected suitor on the eve of her wedding but the author portrayed the strength of will that should be modeled by women in times of repeated crises. Maring had warded off romantic offers from wealthy suitors when her family had suffered financially; instead she went into odd jobs to support her two children and seriously ill husband. Maring has chosen to reject reconciliation from her affluent

former fiancé' at the time that everyone believed that her husband already died. She worked as a laundry woman, a maid, a sales assistant, a vendor, and other jobs like overseeing a fishpond and getting in the street to that an ordinary wife of her time would find appalling.

What stands out from the author's moralism is the courage of Maring to go into a physical struggle against the American police officer who tried to rape her and the wanted bandit who tried to kill her. In the former situation, Maring stabbed the huge American to free herself and went as far as diving into the river to escape arrest from the authorities. She used both her mind and strength in outwitting the bandit when they encountered in the forest by aiming for his eye before she hit his hand with the revolver. Gone was the image of a Filipina who was always fainting on hearing a bad news and confines in bed for depression. As in his former novels, the novel ends with Maring getting a 2,000 peso reward for the bandit and his marriage with Don Eduardo plus the bonus of his children completing their education as a doctor and a lawyer. The blatant moral of the novel is sufficient for Tolentino to convey his message to the readers.

Tolentino's acclaimed *Ang Buhok ni Ester* served as a forum for the author's lecture about good governance. He talks about the motherland *Filipinas* on the brink of death but sees tomorrow as her way of rising, getting her freedom! The gathering that was intended for Ruben's welcome party was diverted into the political preaching of Tolentino as he exposed to the readers the present condition of the country and how to relieve her from the misery. The elderly public servant, *Don Luis* talks about the despondent condition of the land, specifically Pampanga, that it is governed by ignorant, rotten, cowardly public officials who are undeserving of people's trust. He orates about the solutions to the illness of the country and that everybody has to act and give her strength by using wealth and wisdom also by the honor of race. He explained that wealth and wisdom should elicit equal justice to all that will unite both the wealthy and the poor to arrive at a common cause. The honor of race comes from fervent love that is loyal and undivided, pure and whole that binds and stands up to the grave. The author further lectured about the bribery in the government; that *Gloria* had to use her money to the greedy negotiator he termed as a 'crocodile' in order to seek for justice.

Soto's *Lidia* greatly moralizes on how Kapampangans should live according to standards. Soto talks about human relationship on love and primarily on how to keep a promise. In using his authorial authority, Soto addresses his readers based on what he is about to disclose; like he talks to them as acquaintances, as friends, as evil doers, sometimes advises his personal friend *Titang* to rest a while lest she will not bear what he is about to narrate. Soto tells his readers that one bad habit of Filipinas is that everyone wants to see anyone who has a serious illness and this he inferred retards people to see the better things in life like looking for solutions in their present poor condition.

The Kapampangan culture was also used as a vehicle for Soto to instruct about the proper conduct for men and women. He expounded on how a man should go out first after hearing the mass before he gets to talk to a woman whom he fancies while a woman may show her reluctance to a man's intention by going out veiled to be unrecognizable. In attending a theater, men should wait for women to take their seats first before they settle themselves. During dinner, ladies would be attended first and

men refrain from eating unless all ladies had their food. A woman's dignity should be highly treasured as drawn by Soto. The author did not use the usual hindrances like parental objections or social differences for the love of Lidia and Hector but rather used the high reputation that a woman should hold above anything else. Lidia has been deceived by F.D that Hector has humiliated her by flaunting her love letters to him in public. Soto was relentless on his moralism about how a man should properly regard a woman and how a woman should conduct herself. The promise of love that Lidia and Hector pledged for each other was manipulated for Soto's instruction about the sacredness of a promise. He stressed that a promise is meant to be fulfilled otherwise it should not be pledged. He ends his novel with Lidia about to live her whole life in misery because Hector decided to end his life because of a broken word of honor.

Galang as a didactic novelist has made use of the corrupted philosopher's character of Posung to deliver his teachings. Posung has reprimanded his town mates about regionalism; that it's about time to discard it for it becomes twisted patriotism. The character of Leopoldo led to his suicide because he took it as an insult that the woman preferred Conrado from another town instead of him. Good children are assured of a good future so they must obey their parents for on earth they are the highest authority/ On the other hand, parents should not meddle with the love relationships of their children because it is a personal decision that they should be allowed to make and if they do otherwise then they commit a terrible mistake.

The author himself shifts into his lecture and deviates from his narrator in order to promote the beauty of the local towns. He states that Porac is like a little Baguio city that travelers prefer for leisure and sightseeing while Culiati is compared to Manila because of its grand plaza, hotels, canteens, salon, wherein the local products and wealth of Pampanga are stored. Obviously, the author wants his readers to stay in the town and be proud of it as he went further that Culiati has a cinema, a stadium, bar, casino that are not found in the whole Pampanga and even Manila. He rebukes his readers who prefer reading foreign works instead of the local authors' because the latter's writings provide the emotions, ideas and fortitude that the readers personally experience.

### **Commercial Novels**

All the aforementioned novels that were examined had been published in newspapers and local magazines before they had been circulated in books as found out by the stated scholars in Kapampangan literature. From this angle, the novels were used as mediums for authors who were also journalists and newspaper editors to continue their fame as writers and for them to earn money.

*Lidia*, the first prose narrative Kapampangan novel was first published in 1907 in a serial form in a newspaper *Ing Emangabiran* (The Non-Partisan), which Soto has edited at the time. An abbreviated version of it was printed in 1946 in two issues of a magazine, *Ing Kapampangan*. (Manlapaz,1981). Apparently, the series method was effective that the stories appeared in book form which set the trend for novel writing in the vernacular.

About four years later, Tolentino has also circulated his *Ing Buac Nang Ester* (Ester's hair strand) where the Preface showed the optimism of Felino Simpao, also a prominent writer of that time, about the merits of the novel. The book form had

gained popularity that the author produced the second and third parts of the novel with the same title. From the announcement of the First edition, Tolentino informs his readers that the publication of the Second part, which ten chapters he had already specified, shall be in January of 1915. The advertisement for his other novels, both published in 1913, *Kasulatang Ginto* (Golden Scripture) and *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas* (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow) complete with introductory notes was also included. Interested readers may order the books through postal mail and attach 40 centavos as payment for *Kasulatang Ginto* and 30 centavos for *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas*.

The same method of promoting his novels was continued by Tolentino upon the release of the second edition of *Ing Buac Nang Ester* that on his announcement, the Third part which chapters he had already disclosed shall be released in March 1915. He went further to inform the public that his novel *Maring* set for release on February 20, 1915 is his tribute to the greatness of a Filipina; that its initial 5000 copies on its first publication has been sold out in just two weeks. He listed down that the book on *Ing Buac Nang Ester* is worth 40 centavos and 30 centavos for *Maring*. The commercial aspect of the novels is shown on the announcement that there is a big discount on prices on wholesale.

The same tradition on the publication of the novel was likewise patterned by Galang on his *Ing Capalaran* (The Fate) which he also published in two parts. Manlapaz has mentioned in her research that on his second edition, the author titled his novel as *Ing Galal Ning Bie* (The Prize of Life). Seemingly, the novel had also passed on the preference of the reading public that Galang had published a second part.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing accounts, it appeared that the early Kapampangan novels had gained prestige and had been popularized through the serial section of newspapers which later were published into book forms. They were regarded as popular culture that readers had patronized because of the innovations that the prose narratives had provided. The novels portrayed the actual conditions of people, their lives, customs and traditions, their sentiments, emotions, all woven into a whole by the personal experiences of the writers and from their own observations in the society. The use of familiar places, ordinary people, the public officials, the actual surroundings and situations endeared the novels to the readers as they were able to relate to the stories. The shift from the usual verse narratives, the fantasy and adventure tales, the dependence to the divine intervention in times of tribulations, had been replaced by the realistic portrayal of the early novels and somehow freed the readers to illusions and fantasies.

The need for patriots has also been delivered by the novels in their call for nationalism. During the three hundred rule of Spain followed by the take-over of the United States, the thirst for independence has been provided by the novels through the underlying and direct expression of revulsion against the oppressors. The readers have somehow been given a glimpse of hope that someday the motherland shall attain freedom and that it will be through the medium employed by the writers.

The necessity for guidance and directives on a colonized people that seemed to be a requisite in the novels helped the readers regained their high regard for values. In a

society that has been indoctrinated with Christian teachings from their ancestors, the readers welcomed the didactic novels that served as substitutes for the religious pamphlets and literature first disseminated by the missionaries. The teachings were freed from an attempt for blind obedience but wake-up calls for what should be done in their present circumstances. The Kapampangans had been faced with confusions between the dual cultures that beseeched them and the instructive elements of the novels had given them options to come up with better decisions.

Finally, the early vernacular novels had served as avenues for commercialism purposes because during the post-revolution period, the writer freedom-fighters' opportunities for the economic aspect has been affected. They faced persecutions and were imprisoned and besides the new American government, being more liberal, had paved the way for a more freedom of expression. The chances to cater to a much wider audience had been welcomed and being guerillas as they were, the novelists circulated their novels and earned money for themselves.

The century old manuscripts truly deserve appreciation if only for the simple reason that they are considered as a literary legacy that truly represents the ingenuity of a Kapampangan culture.

### **Acknowledgments**

Grateful recognition is owed to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Quezon City, Philippines for the scholarship award bestowed to me with the full support of my institution, the Bataan Peninsula State University, Dinalupihan, Bataan. Likewise, special acknowledgment is offered to the Graduate School of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, for the motivation in making the research and presentation possible.

## Bibliography

Aguas, Juan S. (1963). *Juan Crisostomo Soto and Pampangan Drama*. UP Press, Q.C.

Barnachea, L. (1977). Zoilo M. Galang, the first Filipino encyclopedist. *Archipelago*, A-35, Volume III, 1977, pp. 32-34.

Bertens, Hans. (2001). *Literary Theory, The Basics*. Routledge, London and NY.

Blair and Robertson (1906). *The Philippine Islands, Vol. 38, 1674-1683*, The Arthur Clark Co., USA. Feb.24, 2011, <http://kahimyang.info/resources/books/The-Philippine-Islands-Volume-38.pdf>

Castro, Rosalina I. (1981). *Literature of the Pampangos*. University of the East Press, Manila.

Geertz, C. (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures: *The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man* (pp.46-54). Basic Books, NY.  
Lacson, E. H.(1984). *Kapampangan Writing. A Selected Compendium and Critique*. National Historical Institute, Manila.

Larkin, J. A. (1993). *The Pampangans*. New Day Publishers, Q.C., Phil.

Manlapaz, E.Z. (1975). *Aurelio Tolentino Selected Writings*. UP Press, Q.C.

Manlapaz, E.Z.(1981). *Kapampangan Literature. A Historical Survey and Anthology*. ADMU Quezon City.

Reyes, S. S. (1982). *Nobelang Tagalog, 1905-1975*. ADMU Press, Q.C.

Reyes, S. S. (1992). *Kritisismo. Mga Teorya at Antolohiya para sa Epektibong Pagtuturo ng Panitikan*, ANVIL Publishing, Inc., Pasig, M.M.

Ryan, K., ed. (1996). *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*. Arnold, UK

Soto, J.C. *Lidia*. American Philosophical Society. Library. 31 August 2015 <<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/apz7294.0001.001>

Tantingco, R. (2009). *Singsing*. The Juan D. Nepomuceno Center for Kapampangan Studies. Holy Angel University, Angeles City.

Tolentino, A. (1913?). *Kasulatang ginto: kasaysayan ng buhay Malaya*. Limbagang Noli, Maynila.

Tolentino, A. (1915). *Buak nang Ester, Agpang King Salukuyan A Panaun, Kaduang Dake*.

Tolentino, A. *Ang buhok ni Ester*. American Philosophical Society. Library. 31 August 2015. <<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/APU0970.0001.001>

Tolentino, A. *Maring*. Project Gutenberg EBook. 31 August 2015. <  
<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/APU0970.0001.001>

Tolentino, Aurelio. (1915). *Maring, dangal at lakas. Ulirang Buhay Tagalog*.  
Limbagang Noli, Maynila

Tolentino, Aurelio.(1913). Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas (larawan ng bayan).  
Limbagang Tolentino, Maynila.

Veeser, H. A.,ed.(1994). *The New Historicism Reader*. Routledge, NY

Vidal, L. H., trans. (1981). *Ang Kapalaran ni Zoilo Galang. Isang Nobelang  
Kapampangan*. ADMU Press, Q.C.

Williams, R. (1980). Problems in Materialism and Culture. *Base and Superstructure  
in Marxist Cultural Theory*. (pp.37-45). Verso, London.

Williams, R. (1989). Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism. *Culture is  
Ordinary*. (pp.3-14). Verso, London.