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## Princesa Miramar and Principe Leandro: Text and Context in a Philippine Komedya

DOREEN G. FERNANDEZ

The *komedya* "Princesa Miramar at Principe Leandro" was written "around 1920," I was told by Arcadio Marquez, its septagenarian author. He had learned the writing of *komedya* from his grandfather, who had been writing about Moro-Cristiano princes and princesses early in the century. "As he spat out his betelnut chew," Mr. Marquez said, "he also spouted the *komedya* lines that someone then wrote down for him."<sup>1</sup>

"Princesa Miramar" is not typical of the Philippine *komedya* in that it is short, meant to be staged in only one night instead of the more usual three or five. However, it is typical in that it has all the elements folk audiences have loved in the *komedya* for two centuries: princes and princesses falling in love instantly and lyrically; *batalya* (battle scenes) between Moros and Cristianos, men and women, giants and mortals; an *embahada* (ambassadorial mission) conducted in the usual haughty manner; bandits and wild beasts encountered in forests; a *torneo* (tournament) in which the victor wins the hand of the princess; an angry king who metes punishment and a beautiful queen who pleads for mercy; a miracle; problems resolving in a happy ending; and of course the traditional dodecasyllabic rhyming quatrains that use all the favorite images and words for love and

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1. The Philippinized spelling is used to distinguish the native theatre form from its ancestor, the Spanish *comedia*, a play in verse with three *jornadas* or parts. Most *komedya* terms are from the Spanish (e.g. *batalya-batalla*; *palasya-palacio*) and the vernacular (e.g. *hari* or king; *kaharian* - kingdom or court).

war and villainy. The only komedya elements it does not have are a *pusong* or clown to make fun, irreverent comments, and pointed references to people in the audience or town, and *mahiya* or special "magical" stage effects.

"Princesa Miramar" was staged on 15 May 1982, as the yearly komedya of Barrio San Dionisio, Parañaque, Metro Manila. At first it had seemed that there might not be a komedya that year, since the *hermano mayor* slated to fund the year's play had backed out because of the economic situation. However, another *hermano*, Jerry Santiago, had been found, and also an *hermana mayor*, the daughter of Judge Cruz. Since it was not to be a big fiesta, however, "only a small *palasyo*" had been built, and only a one-day komedya chosen. It was staged for the Santa Cruz (the feast of the finding of the Holy Cross), one of the traditional reasons for celebrating in May. For the year following, a real three-day fiesta was planned for "Tata Dune," the patron saint San Dionisio.<sup>2</sup> Still, Jerry Santiago had spent ₱12,000 for the play, and expected to spend more. Miss Cruz had spent an undisclosed amount on food for the participants in both play and procession.<sup>3</sup>

The play had been scheduled to begin after the *Santacruz* procession, which in San Dionisio includes a *sunduan*, with a troupe of young men fetching the pretty young girls from their houses. "About 6:00," the informant's note had said; "8:00," the committee member on the stage (wearing a Princesa Miramar T-shirt) told the gathering audience. About 8:30 the indispensable ceremonies began: a speech by the author; the National Anthem; a call for Miss Cruz who was absent, but who eventually relayed her message through the director; a *presentasyon* of each of the cast by the director, former *principe* Hermie Hernandez, with each taking a bow (except for Raul Salvador, the king, who, Hermie announced, was still having his make-up put on); a speech of acknowledgement and gratitude by Jerry Santiago the *hermano*; the presentation by the latter of certificates of appreciation to the cast and director. The cast had been exiting, but were called back, while the audience fidgeted and commented on Mr. Santiago's running for a political position in the local elections scheduled for the Monday following.

2. Town and barrio (village) fiestas are usually celebrated on the feasts of patron saints. San Dionisio is called by his nickname, Dune, and Tata, which is a traditional term for an older man or father. The name thus suggests a familial, filial attitude to the patron saint who, legend has it, appeared in the barrio and asked that a komedya stage be built on the spot on which one stands today.

3. At the time of staging, the Philippine peso-dollar exchange was ₱8.5 to \$1.

The play finally began at 8:58 P.M., and ended at 12:45 A.M., although the director had expected it to last till about 2:00 A.M., since there had not been a run-through that he could time. However, the stage crew had been efficient, bringing "thrones" (chairs) and "gardens" (potted plants) in and out rapidly. The entries of the *kaharian* (kings and their courts) had been prompt and the exits brisk, and the new device of posting each page of the script backstage with stage directions marked in felt pen, with each page crossed out as enacted, seemed to have worked well. The two Christian princes and their Moro princesses, the Moro prince and his Christian princess, the Sultana and her General, and all their changes of costume, and even the "small *palasyo*" provided a measure of splendor and spectacle, and brought to life once more the world of the San Dionisio komedya.

#### BARRIO SAN DIONISIO

San Dionisio is no ordinary village now, since it is only about thirty minutes' drive from the Manila City Hall and business center, is urban in appearance and economic structure, and is well within Metro Manila. It is quite wealthy, because fishing, saltmaking and embroidery are no longer the principal income sources of its residents. Many work in Manila offices and industries, and the building of residential subdivisions (B.F. Homes, Tahanan Village, and others) has made real estate values rise. The San Dionisio Cooperative, for which director Hermie Hernandez works, is one of the most successful of its kind.<sup>4</sup>

In this context, it seems surprising that the komedya, which elsewhere has been pushed away from urban centers and into rural areas, should survive at all in contemporary times. The residents explain that Tata Dune likes komedya for his feast, and would make it rain if a *sarswela* were to be staged instead.<sup>5</sup> Besides, the barrio's good fortune is a debt to San Dionisio. In more concrete terms, the komedya patrons and audience and *Samahang Komedya* (the troupe) believe that the komedya is a tradition as well as a commitment to the Saint, and itself brings good luck. Jerry Santiago recounts that Mrs. Conching Salvador (owner of a large embroidery business) had

4. Many rural cooperatives have not been too successful, but the San Dionisio Cooperative Credit Union, Inc., is a success, and counts many of the younger *komedyante* among its members.

5. The *sarswela* is a play with music, usually dealing with domestic situations. The name and form derive from the Spanish zarzuela.

once spent about ₱150,000 as *hermana mayor*, but since it had returned tenfold, she was willing to fund still another feast. The position of *hermano* and *hermana* is one of prestige in the community, winning regard, affection, and remembrance. The mayor and the older residents can name the patrons of the last ten years, as well as the komedya they sponsored. It is also believed that if a girl invited to play *prinsesa* (a process of choice and formal request reminiscent of marriage) refuses, she will fall ill, and only the oil of San Dionisio can make her well again.

The komedya is thus funded by the wealthy, acted by the talented youth and elders, and staged by a devoted group of former *komed-yantes* officially organized into a *Komite ng Matatandang Lalake at Babae*.<sup>6</sup> Its audience is the whole of San Dionisio, especially the children and the older men and women, and friends and relatives from neighboring barrios.

The very real community of San Dionisio—a geographical, political, economic and historical entity, constitutes the exterior world of the komedya "Princesa Miramar at Principe Leandro." Its author functions within this community both as lawyer and as writer (as his grandfather had). Its director is known both as Hermie who had been the original Principe Rodante in the 1950s,<sup>7</sup> and as Hermie of the cooperative. The play is not only an evening's entertainment, but a commitment to the patron saint, and thus an acknowledgement of faith, folk belief, and community history. It is a thread in a web of community relations and interaction, a link in a continuum of feast-

6. "Committee of Elder Men and Women," who supervise funding, casting, rehearsing, production and actual performance.

7. The komedya has also been called the Moro-Moro, because it has traditionally dealt with Moro-Christian conflicts. These have not been the actual conflicts in Mindanao, but imagined wars in Arabia, Persia, Francia, Albanya. In most komedyas throughout Luzon and the Visayas, the Moros are arrogant villains who are defeated by the Christians, who have right and God on their side. Love Between Moro and Christian must end in marriage after conversion, and this is the standard komedya ending. This has made scholars believe that the komedya was encouraged by the Spaniards as part of the campaign for Christianity and against the Muslims in Mindanao, against whom Filipino Christian soldiers were led into battle by Spanish officers. The komedya may also have been a factor that encouraged divisiveness between Filipino Christians and Muslims. Understandably, the Muslims do not like the term "Moro-Moro," which has been largely discarded. In the 1950s Max Allanigue of San Dionisio wrote "Principe Rodante," which was at first not acceptable to the komedya stalwarts because it departed from the formula. The villain was a Christian prince who usurped his father's throne, and Moros and Christians joined forces to set things right. This fact leads me to believe that "Princesa Miramar," which has a Christian king for a villain, may not have been written "in the 1920s" as the author said, but after the success and acceptance of "Principe Rodante."

ing and celebrations, an echo and development of folk theater practices. The play would not have been, and does not exist, outside the concrete reality of this community, a world both referential and actual, with both shared memories and plans for a future. The actors, directors, audience watched "Princesa Miramar" both as play and as project, secure that next year the lumber yards would still lend lumber for the stage, the carpenters would still volunteer their services, an hermano would fund the play and an hermana the food, the elders would choose the pretty princesses in December and begin rehearsals in January, former komedyantes would keep order and act as prompters. Nor would it rain in May when San Dionisio would have his procession and his komedya. Community solidarity would once again be reasserted and affirmed.

### THE KOMEDYA

If San Dionisio is the exterior world of "Princesa Miramar," its interior world is the komedya as drama and theatre form. Once also called the Moro-Moro, the form derives from the Spanish *comedia* only in that it is in verse, and full-length. In Spain this meant *tres jornadas*, while in most of the Philippines it means three to five days or even a week (Cebu is said to have had month-long komedya), several hours a night, whether or not the text was formally divided into parts.<sup>8</sup>

The content of komedya originally seems to have derived from metrical romances from Europe and principally from Spain: the matter of Greece and Rome, of France and Britain; historical and semi-historical Spanish and Portuguese narratives. These were first translated into the Filipino metrical romances called *awit* and *corrido*, and indigenized by reinterpretation, reorientation, and reshaping into modes and manners recognizably Philippine.<sup>9</sup> The content was then wedded to theatrical conventions that evolved through decades: the costumes, sober in hue for Christians and bright for Moros (they facilitated vision and identification on the open-air stages in plazas or fields, to which the viewers brought their own benches); the

8. *Jornada*, literally "a day's journey," is the Spanish term for an act or major division in a play. In the komedya, the terms *yugto* or *bahagi* (parts) are used sometimes, but often, as in "Princesa Miramar," no divisions are indicated, only entrances and exits.

9. Both *awit* and *corrido* are composed of monorhyming quatrains, with twelve syllables in the *awit*, and eight in the *corrido*. Both include tales of chivalry, adventure, fantasy, and holy men and women.

marching exits and entrances indicative of dignity and distance; the choreographed *batalya* using wooden swords, daggers and spears vaguely European in shape, but with the movements of the native martial art called *arnis*;<sup>10</sup> the scenes of love at first sight, parting, problems, and happy resolution; the ritual bravery of the *torneo* in which the hero proves himself against odds; the symmetry of the *paseo*; the giants and bandits and wild animals that menaced hero and heroine; the declamatory manner that rose and fell with the caesura and the emotion, and made listening from a distance (before or without microphones) possible.

Every element in the komedya is standard and expected. Each playwright simply fleshes out, rearranges, and bridges them differently.<sup>11</sup> Since, in San Dionisio, the scripts have been played and re-played—the hermano or hermana having the privilege to choose his favorite komedya for the year of sponsorship—and the rehearsals are open to viewing (one can request that a night's rehearsal be held in a place of one's choice, if one provides the refreshments), even the characters and situations of a particular play are familiar.

This referential world of Christian kings and Moro sultans, of court and battleground, may have originally been introduced through Spanish colonization, but it has now become the realm of Philippine fantasy, where princesses are always beautiful and elegant, and princes always brave and handsome; where kings command regally and queens intercede in sympathy; people make love and make war, but all reassuringly ends in marriage, and in conversion to Christianity, and thus in happiness and tranquillity. This is how life should be, and how all stories must end.

The viewer of "Princesa Miramar" is constantly within and aware of both exterior and interior worlds as he watches the play unfold. He can never be "lost" in the play and oblivious of these worlds, not only because these are as present as the action on stage, but also because the acting style is not realistic. The grandiloquence and extravagance refer him to the komedya. The members of the commu-

10. *Arnis de mano* uses wooden batons as weapons, with movements of thrust and parry very much like fencing.

11. Francisco Baltazar (Balagtas), a schooled Tagalog poet, and the major writer of metrical romances in the nineteenth century, has one surviving komedya, "Orosman at Zafira," which shows the height to which this "rearrangement" can be brought. His poetry is new and not built exclusively on convention; his images are fresh and not stereotypical, his versification polished. His characters emerge not as types, but are close to becoming individuals, and the plot is no mere arrangement of stock situations.

nity playing roles refer him to San Dionisio. Although he may thrill, for example, to Principe Leandro's victory in a Moro kingdom's torneo (he sees no anachronism), his appreciation is seasoned by the memory of other torneo in other plays. Furthermore, he is fully conscious that Leandro is played by Jimmy Nery, who has been lead *principe* in San Dionisio for the last fifteen years, and who claims that he is really retiring this year. He may smile or say "Uy-y-y" in appreciation when a princess is called "sula nitong puso't tanging panagimpan" (precious gem of this heart, and my only dream), but this is not because the line is arrestingly new or filled with insight. Rather, it is because it is familiar, although a different formulation of terms heard before, and because he is also thinking of other former *princesa* now married, of other love scenes, and of who the actors are outside their stage personae. He might even get up to greet an aunt or buy a softdrink or return home briefly, during the play. When he returns, he will not really have missed a major part of the story or skipped a beat of the feeling, not only because the plot is episodic and references are repetitive, but also because it is assumed, predictable, and he hardly needs the actual performance to unfold the story for himself. As he sits in the audience, he is both within San Dionisio, Parañaque and within the komedya tradition, while also within the story of Princesa Miramar. And he is secure in all three, because all three constitute a universe of order.

#### ORDER AND THE KOMEDYA WORLD

*Prosody.* There is order, first of all, in the versification. Twelve-syllable rhyming quatrains occur throughout, in love scenes:

Walang kailangang mabuhay pa ako  
kung ikaw ay wala mahal kong  
Leandro  
tapos na ang lahat, tapos na irog ko  
ang kaligayahang layaw ko sa  
mundo.<sup>12</sup>

There is no need for me to live on  
if you are no longer here, beloved  
Leandro.  
All is over; all gone, my love  
is the happiness with which the  
world has pampered me.

12. The translations of quotations from the text cited in this paper, are by the writer. They are transliterations intended to convey the meanings of the words as accurately as possible, without trying for rhythm, meter, rhyme, or poetic quality. The text quoted is a typed copy of the script dated 1968, citing a performance date: 26 April 1969.



or in the vaunting of battle:

Kapag nagka gayun, Sultan ay tandaan	If that should happen, remember O Sultan
bubuga ng apoy ang alpangheng taglay	this sword I possess will spit fire;
ipag-hihigante ang Princesang mahal	the beloved Princess will be avenged;
aking lilipulin ang kakristianohan.	I shall slaughter all of Christendom.

When there are, occasionally, shorter lines, they are six-syllable lines (half-lines) of address or farewell:

Mga kamahalan	Your majesties
Mga soldados ko	My soldiers
Miramar, paalam	Farewell, Miramar

or exclamation:

Biba at mabuhay	Long live . . .
Laking kaululan	What great nonsense!

or a fragment of dialogue that may be balanced off by another such fragment:

Ramir: Hintay muna kayo mga aking sama	Ramir: Wait a while my comrades,
pagmasdang mabuti itong nakikita	look well at these whom we espy
wari ko'y binyagan . . .	I think they are Christians
Soldados: Tunay po Principe ang iyong tinuran	Soldiers: What you say is true, my Prince
bihagin ang dapat . . .	we should take them captive . . .

such that the totality emerges as another quatrain.

The monorhyme is constant and consistent, and done in the asonantal manner of Tagalog versifying, with the final vowels identical (kamahalan, pakinggan, iluluwal, igalang; ipinagturing, susundin, panimdim, marating; huminahon, lingatong, bugtong, burol), but not necessarily the consonants. There is a predominance of *a*-rhymes in "Princesa Miramar" because *a* is the vowel predominant in Tagalog word-endings.

The caesura always occurs after every sixth syllable, and all lines are end-stopped. Every two lines complete a clause, and every four constitute a sentence. Prosody in this, as in almost any other komedya, is exact and uniform, informed by an external symmetry.

The ideas implicit to the komedya world, and thus to the people who write and respond to them, reveal the values that order the world from within.

*Honor. Dangkal*, or honor, is not only derived from and reflective of the Spanish *pundonor*, described as an

... unwritten but fetish-like code [that] regulated all social relationships: those between king and subject, between superior and inferior, between friend and friend, and between members of the same family. Its basis is the paramount importance of the right ordering of social relationships. The wholeness, or integrity, of society comes before personal integrity; in fact the latter can scarcely be thought of apart from the former. The criterion of behaviour is thus always a social one: not so much to be, as to be seen to be. Honour resides not in the ordering of one's own life, but in the esteem in which one is held by others.<sup>13</sup>

but also an actual and current concern. Royalty is of course honored, called *marangal* (honorable, full of honor)—*Altesang marangal, Prince-sang marangal*. The sultan also announces that he wants even defeat to be honorable (*ang pagkakatalo'y . . . maging marangal*), while the Mantenedor, master of the tournament, proclaims the rule that

Sino mang madusta't mailing ang buhay	When one is defeated, his life endangered.
walang mag-hahabol sa puri at dangal ngunit kung suko na at wala nang laban	no one can appeal for his honor; but if he admits defeat and is helpless,
huag papatayin, tawad ay pakamtan.	he should not be killed, but extended pardon.

The tournament grounds are *plaza ng dangal* (fields of honor) where the code rules, and those who break it or thwart the Sultan's will are without honor, as are the giants who threaten a princess:

Huwag kayong lumapit mga walang dangal	Do not come near me, you men without honor,
lahi ng demonyo't impakto sa parang.	of the devil's race, evil spirits of the meadows.

A prince stakes not only life but honor, in order to win his princess:

Dangal, sampong buhay aking pinuhunan	Honor as well as life, I have staked
matamo ka lamang pangarap sa buhay.	just to win you, my life's dream.

13. Margaret Wilson, *Spanish Drama of the Golden Age* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1969), p. 43.

and the rejection of the Moro princess by Haring Felipe is dishonor (an insult to *puri at dangal*), as is the defeat of Heneral Madrago (*dinustang onra*—outraged honor) by the Christian prince who had dared intrude into the Moro torneo. The battles are not to win territories or to defeat enemies as much as they are to avenge dishonor and preserve honor.

Honor can thus be perceived as ordering filial, royal and comradely relationships, behavior in love, battle and court, and the appearance, manner and process of living within the komedya world.

*Respect.* *Galang* is at base the respect due age and position, but also a reverence due King and parent (*Haring Ama ko na iginagalang*—respected King and father), an acknowledgement of the bond between friends (*Katotong Lizardo na iginagalang*—respected bosom friend, Lizardo); a statement of the rightness in structures of order (*ang resa ng armas dapat na iginalang*—the code of arms should be respected), an affirmation of the high position of women (Florita: *Salamat sa inyong pagbibigay galang / yaring puso'y naliligayahan*—Thank you for according me respect; my heart rejoices). It thus orders relationships between friends, sovereign and subject, man and woman, and within societal structure as well as within society itself. It is bonded to honor, serving with it as a foundation stone of the komedya world.

*Love.* To no other element are so many lines devoted in the komedya as there are to *pag-ibig*—mainly romantic, but also filial and comradely—an indication of its primal place in this romantic theater form, as well as of its importance to the Filipino and his literature.<sup>14</sup> The choice of komedya is often determined by the number of princesses in it (an *hermana* once specified a play with seven princesses), each of whom is of course half of a love pair, since no princess goes unloved or uncourted.

The trappings of love are always storybook in quality. The princesses not only sparkle in the latest fashion, but are beautiful (*sakdal ng dilag*—the height of beauty; *daig pa si Venus sa kagandahan*—exceeding Venus in beauty; *marikit na tala*—lovely star[s]). The princes are more handsome than Adonis, and are also lordly in stance (*kay ganda ng kiyas at tipo / wari maharlika at isang ginoo*—how handsome in mien and stance; he seems a noble and a gentleman).

They fall in love instantly. Leandro enters the torneo to win Miramar, whom he has never seen, but who has captured his heart.

14. A very strong romantic tradition is visible in much of Philippine secular literature: in the *awit* and the *corrido*; in the *dagli* that was the precursor of the short story; in the poetry and the novels of the early twentieth century; in the plays of the first three decades of the century, and in radio and television drama.

She pleads that he be permitted to join, even if the tournament has been declared won by Madrago because "Sa tikas at tindig nitong bagong dating / yaring puso'y giniyagis mandin" (the bearing and carriage of this new arrival has disturbed this heart). Ramir sees Florida disguised and asleep in a garden, but he sees through her man's clothing:

O at babae pala himala ng dilag  
puso koy nalupig at sadyang  
nabihag

Oh, she is a girl miraculous in beauty;  
my heart is vanquished and perforce  
captured.

Although she tells him that she does not know about love as yet, and suggests that he look among the many other girls, she calls him back when he goes, and is soon calling him "sinta ko at ibig" (my sweetheart, my love). When Rolante saves Armida from giants, and she asks how she might reward him, he declares himself:

Mahal na Princesa kung ibig  
matalos  
ang katotohanang laman nyaring loob  
ang ikaw'y alayan ng pagsintang lubos  
kung mamarapatin ng iyong alindog.

Beloved Princess, if you should wish  
to know  
the truth that is within me [my heart],  
it is the desire to offer you perfect love  
if your loveliness would allow it.

Bilang gantingpalang ipagkakaloob,  
ang iyong pagibig sa aki'y ilimos.

If you should indeed wish to reward me,  
give your love to me, as alms to a beggar.

Love refreshes even a sorrowing widow, and melancholy is banished, as Sultana Salimar tells Heneral Rondal, chiding him for absence. He explains that obedience to his superior and the duties of war are to blame, but "dika nawawaglit sa puso ko't diwa" (she has not been misplaced from heart and spirit).

In such love, absence is unbearable, and death to be preferred to separation. Miramar says:

Nanga saan kayo lilong kamatayan  
at di pa tapusin yaring aking buhay  
O palad na lihis saan pa  
hahanggan  
yaring obeja mong sawing  
kapalaran.

Where are you, treacherous death  
that you do not yet end this my life  
O fortune gone astray, where else can  
she go,  
this lamb of yours, beset with  
misfortune.

When Haring Felipe dies, Reyna Carmela laments:

Ano pa sa ngayon yaring katuturan  
wala na ang aking pinakamamahal,  
kamatayan lapit, kunin yaring buhay  
nang dina danasin yaong kahirapan.

What value do I have now that  
my most dearly beloved is no more;  
come close, death, take this life  
that I may no longer experience this  
hardship.

Wala na, wala na ngang tunay  
ang tanging katalik sa kaligayahan,  
wala nang aaliw kung may  
kalungkutan  
dini sa puso ko, ay sa aba nang buhay.

Kaya nga sa ngayoy dina kailangan  
na palawigin pa yaring aking buhay,  
O Diyos na poong makapangyarihan  
isama na akong malibing ang bangkay.

Gone, truly lost  
is my only companion in joy,  
no one is left to comfort me in  
sorrow  
here in my heart, in this destitute life.

And so now there is no longer need  
to prolong this my life any longer  
O God, lord of power  
take me with him, to earthly burial.

In this komedya, love is the ordering principle that transcends the reigning prohibition between Moro and Cristiano<sup>15</sup> which governs most komedya and causes wars and parental conflicts because, as Florita and Rolante tell their father, Haring Felipe:

Rolante:

Sa gawang pagibig lahat pantay-pantay  
walang inuuri maging sino pa man  
Moro ma't Kristianong may dangal na  
taglay  
dapat na igalang ng sandaigdigan.

In this matter of love all are equal;  
no one is classified or excluded;  
Moro or Christian is possessed of  
honor  
that the whole world should respect.

Florita:

Moro ma't Kristiano sa gawang pagibig  
dapat na igalang ang sa pusung nais.

Moro or Christian, in the matter of love  
the wishes of the heart should be  
respected.

Love is a gift, good fortune of a high order, implying both the basal values of honor and respect.

The primal position of love is further attested to by the fact that love scenes are the most popular of komedya episodes, evoking vocal approbation, sighs, applause (although there is often no applause at the end of the komedya since the audience greet each other, the patron and the actors, or scramble up on stage). The audiences become attentive, soft, teasing sometimes. When the love ends, as it always does, in marriage ("Princesa Miramar" ends with all Moros baptized and all couples paired, blessed by parents, ready for marriage), there is satisfaction about the rightness of such a resolution. In the komedya world, love is always chaste and true, only temporarily rejected or bereft (a miracle brings Haring Felipe back to life for Reyna Carmela), and ever happy—everything in order.

15. Very few komedya do not build on the impossibility of marriage between Moro (prince, princess) and Christian (princess, prince).

*Heroism.* The *batalya* or battle scenes come next in order of popularity. Children creep to the front and up the stage stairs, to be threatened by old men carrying sticks and canes for the purpose. Bodies swing and heads nod to the *paso doble* (two-step) the band plays. Men and women cheer.

The qualities of maleness and heroism—assumed to go together—are both stated and implied in battle scenes and the preparation for these, when vaunts and threats fly. The warrior's *sigla* (liveliness, agility), *dahas* (daring, ferocity), *tapang at lakas* (bravery and strength) are spoken of. His lance thirsts for blood (*uhaw na pika*). His sword flashes like lightning, and his dagger knows no pause (*taga at ulos na walang pagitan*).

Threats rain down on the enemy, of homelands to be invaded (*ako ang lulusob sa Albanyang bayan*), of last breaths to be drawn (*ito'y katapuhan / nang hininga nila'y sa mundo'y papanaw*), of death dealt to young and old in floods of blood and piles of corpses (*matanda't batang sa dugo'y lulutang / dito'y matatambak ang maraming bangkay*), of total destruction and ruin (*aking gugunawin . . . ating gubatin ang reynong Albania*). Challenges are delivered by messenger during an *embahada*. Also when warriors meet face to face while ranged in battle formation or in sudden confrontation in forests or tournament grounds, and even during pauses in battle, for the warriors often stop swordplay to deliver threats, since speaking and battling cannot be done simultaneously. Bravery is shown to be overt, frontal, absolute, physical, to the limit—not based on cunning, strategy, or tactics.

The action of the *batalya* itself is eloquent about the warrior's qualities. There is a ritual of preparation: swords are held in the right hand and daggers in the left. One or the other is pointed at the enemy as the fighter leans backward or crouches. He marches forward and backward, eye on the enemy, sword twirling to music. This rite is called *giri-an*, a term also used for the strutting of cocks around a hen or before a cockfight, and indeed the warrior is showing off to the princess as well as impressing the enemy with his devil-may-care bravery and bravura. This demonstrates not only fearlessness and a gallantry proper to battle, but also a grace deemed proper and desirable in the warrior.

A related statement is the *eskaramosa*,<sup>16</sup> which the men perform before battle. In this, each one waltzes, alone or with one from the

16. The word *eskaramosa* may have originally derived from *escaramuza*, meaning skirmish, but in the process of indigenization, it came to mean the dance performed before the skirmish.

opposite rank, sword or lance in hand, down towards front stage center, then towards the king upstage center. There he turns around, and bows to the audience. There may be teasing and hooting while this is done. There may be a clumsy clumping of boots, or an awkwardness with the waltz, but no soldier is embarrassed, because this is proper to the warrior, just as much as are the threats and the skill with the sword.

The actual swordplay is governed by patterns of thrust and parry and throw, always done to music. All male actors—kings, princes, generals, counsellors, soldiers—train in the basic positions during long rehearsals. These are based not on the stances of fencing (which were largely unfamiliar to provincial *komedya* before the cinema came in, in the 1920s), but on the movements of *arnis*. In San Dionisio, these have been varied and augmented by other skills borrowed from compatible disciplines: tumbling, wrestling, even occasionally judo. But always, the combat is patterned, ceremonial, nonbrutal, honorable, because *dangal* and *galang* are regnant here too.

Heroism, therefore—and in the *komedya* all the men do battle and are expected to be heroic—means physical daring, agility and skill, grace, respect for rule and form, and honor.

*Villainy*. A lexicon of stock phrases outlines the faces of villainy in the *komedya*. They occur in every *komedya*, and often (at least seventy times in "*Princesa Miramar*") in various combinations of twos or threes or phrase settings: *lilong Heneral*, *Madragong bulaan*, *Kristianong hunghang*, *taong uslak*, *suwail kong anak*, *lilo at sukab*, *lilo at taksil*, *palamara't sukab*, *lilo't palamara*, *lilo't tampalasan*, *mga palamara*, *taksil at sukaban*, *iyang makuhila*, *lilo't sinungaling*.

The terms are no longer current, and rarely used in daily conversation or in current movies, plays, radio and television programs, or in contemporary fiction and poetry. They are now considered to belong almost exclusively to the *komedya*, and seem to be chosen and placed by the folk poets largely for reasons of line length and rhyme, or for variety, and not for accuracy of meaning. However, they do have nuances of meaning, and reveal an unspoken roster of traits that are not acceptable to the *komedya* ethic. They say more than the writer meant, of a mental reality that he may not even have thought of explicitly, so deeply buried is it in the language.

The words all date back at least to the eighteenth century, and possibly earlier, for they are all found in the *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala* by Juan de Noceda and Pedro de Sanlucar, which was published in 1754. It was begun in the seventeenth century by the Jesuit

Clain, and is believed to contain orally transmitted folk material dating to "the period of the first relations between the native and Spanish cultures (1570-1699)."<sup>17</sup>

BALAWIS	colerico, amigo de su parecer, intratable (choleric, hot-headed, enamoured of his own opinion; intractable, stubborn)
BULAAAN	mentiroso, mentir, mas que <i>sinongaling</i> (liar, to lie, more than <i>sinongaling</i> )
COHILA ( <i>Makuhila</i> )	incitar, ocasionar la perdida de otro (to incite, to cause another's loss)
HALAY ( <i>Mahalay</i> )	torpeza; deshonestidad (rudeness, lewdness, obscenity, contemptibleness, wanting in ornament or culture)
HUNGHANG	necio, tonto, bellaco, malicioso (stupid, foolish, impudent, cunning, roguish, deceitful; malicious)
LILO	cruel, sin conciencia; hacer traicion; ser ingrato; equivocarse dando una cosa por otra (cruel, without conscience; to do treason; to be ungrateful; to mistakenly give one thing instead of another)
PALALO	altivo, sobervio, arrogante (proud, haughty, overbearing, arrogant)
PALAMARA	ingrato, descuidado, que hace poco caso del beneficio recibido (ungrateful; negligent; thoughtless, heedless, slovenly; one who gives little thought or attention to benefits received)
PANGAHAS	atrevimiento, osadia, arrogancia (audacity, boldness, intrepidity, arrogance)
SOLOPICA ( <i>Sulupika</i> )	embustero, mas que <i>sinongaling</i> (impostor, cheat, hypocrite, dissembler, worse than a liar)
SOUAIL ( <i>Suwail</i> )	atrevido, desvergonzado (audacious, insolent; impudent, shameless)
SINONGALING	embustero, mentiroso (impostor, cheat, hypocrite, dissembler, liar)
SUCAB ( <i>Sukab</i> )	tener rencor; tratar con doblez; hacer traicion; hombre de mala voluntad; traicion (to have rancor or animosity; to treat with duplicity; to do treason; men of ill will)
TAKSIL	necio, tonto (stupid, foolish, impudent)
TAMPALASAN	bellaco, descomedido, desvergonzarse (cunning, roguish, deceitful; rude, impudent, insolent; excessive, disproportionate, immoderate; shameless)
LOLO ( <i>ulul</i> )	loco, lunatico (crazy, lunatic)

17. Bienvenido Lumbera, "Poetry of the Early Tagalogs," *Philippine Studies* 16 (April 1968): 223.



OSLAK (*uslak*) languaraz, charlatan, lerdo, mentecato, que siempre hace tonterias (forward, petulant, talkative; charlatan; slow heavy, dull; foolish, silly, stupid; one who always does foolish things)

To these one may add *masamang asal* and *lihis sa magandang asal*, meaning ill-mannered, or behaving in a way that deviates from good (literally beautiful) manners.

Although all this may sound like ritual name-calling (and most people think it is, without bothering to consider the terms separately) the words must have been fresh, accurate and pointed when they were first used. Their retention even in contemporary komedya, when they are no longer in current use (except possibly for *ulul*) suggests that they are still indeed the outlines of villainy, drawn through komedya history. They declare that the opposite of being a courageous hero (worthy of honor and respect) ready to fight to the death for love of woman and/or country, is to be lying, ungrateful and treacherous. Also arrogant and audacious, double-dealing and dishonest, rude and cruel, unmotivated by respect and honor. The villain, the evil man, is one not in order because he deviates from the good.

*Harmony.* Another komedya formula that says more than it seems to, and certainly more than the author means it to, is the chorus of agreement by *soldados* or *concejeros* whenever the king or other royal person speaks:

sa bawat nais mo ay di sumusuway	each wish of yours we do not disobey
kami po'y sang-ayon O dakilang Sultan	we are in agreement, O great Sultan
Kung siya mong nais Princesang marikit	If that is your wish, beautiful Princess
ako ay sang-ayon, galak yaring dibdib	I am in agreement, with joy in my heart
Alinsunod kami bunying Sultana	we are in agreement, illustrious Sultana.

When a loved one, parent or child, or superior speaks, agreement is also expressed, not taken for granted or implied:

Armida kong sintang pinakamamahal balang ibigin moy hindi sumusuway	Armida mine, most beloved sweetheart, whatever you wish I will not disobey
Kong siya mong hangad bunsong ginigiliw	If that is your desire, beloved [youngest] child
Yaong ang magaling, mabunying heneral	That is what is good [proper], distinguished general

The formula follows every statement of purpose or wish, the announcement of every plan, strategy or feeling, and is often used to close a scene, exit from the stage following the expression of agreement.

More than formula, it expresses a harmony of purpose, a unity expressed and explicit with the one commanding or desiring or inviting. Its constant repetition (there are forty-one such statements in "Princesa Miramar") suggests the importance of this harmony.

In this text, the only instances of disagreement are clear cases of disharmony. The first is Haring Felipe's anger at his son's, Principe Leandro's, having fought in a torneo and won Princesa Miramar, a Moro. Reyna Carmela pleads with him. Princesa Florita argues that love has a higher power than religious differences, but he does not agree, and orders Leandro imprisoned.

The second instance is the embajada conducted by Sultana Salimar when she demands an apology for the insult to Princesa Miramar (her rejection by Haring Felipe and thus by Albanya). Felipe's answer is further insult:

Kay sarap pakinggan gandang ulinigan	How delicious it is to listen, to overhear
ang mga wika mong pawang	your words, all of which are lies
sinungaling	

but Reyna Carmela's is a declaration of war:

Iyang pag-wiwika sa Haring	That way of speaking to the honored
marangal	King
ay iyong itigil Morismang bulaan	you must stop, O lying Moor;
baka di mapigil yaring kagalitan	if I cannot control my anger
ay sunggaban kita at ipag-hampasan.	I will strike and deal you blows.
Ang iyong sabihin doon sa nag-utos	What you should tell him who sent you
talim ng sibat ko siyang	is that I offer him the sharpness of my
idudulot	spear
na sa kanyang leeg doon mag-lalagos	which will pierce his neck through
nang di mamihasa buhay ay malagot.	so he may not be accustomed [to this
	behavior] and his life will end.

The third instance occurs in the very last scene of the play, when Lizardo reminds the queen that before the marriages can take place, the law of the land requires that the Moros be baptized. Even when his daughter Miramar pleads, Sultan Graturko is adamant in refusal:

Ano ang dahila't iyong tatalikdan	What is the reason that you turn your back
ang mga diyoses na iginagalang?	on the gods whom we respect?

Kung ang Diyos nila ay Diyos na tunay    If their God is indeed true God  
 anot di buhayin ang Haring marangal?    why does he not bring the honorable  
    King back to life?

The answer to this question is prompt. There is thunder and lightning, a cross shines in the sky, and Haring Felipo comes back to life from the death he had dealt himself in repentance.

All three instances of disharmony are resolved. Haring Felipo repents of his harshness to his children, and asks God's forgiveness for excesses (*sa pagmamalabis na aking ginawa*) of interpretation, of adherence to Moro-Cristiano division, of filial obedience demanded, of disharmony with the general will to understanding and love. He kills himself, but this disharmonious act is reversed by a miracle.

The war with Arabia and Persia is led by Reyna Carmela, since Haring Felipo has fallen ill. This causes Principe Leandro to emerge from his despondence. It also causes Ramir, now in love with Florita, to ask for peace, and Rolante to plead for a return to tranquility; and the three princesses to beg for agreement rather than war:

Pagkat nananalig kaming kalahatan ang pagkakasundo ang lalong mainam, ano man ang sanhi at kadahilanan ito'y maaayos ng buong hinusay.	Because all of us steadfastly believe that agreement among us is to be desired and that whatever the motive or cause this can be remedied in complete order.
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To this Ramir adds:

Anong sagot ninyo mga kamahalan itigil na ninyo iyang paglalaban tayo'y magkasundo ng walang ligamgam at papaghariin ang katahimikan.	What is your answer, your highnesses, put an end to this fighting; we can come to agreement without disquietude, and let tranquility reign instead.
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and all Moros and Cristianos agree: "Kami ay sang-ayon sa iyong tinuran" (We are in agreement with what you suggest.)

The final disharmony is of religions, and expressed by Sultan Graturko. This is the operative conflict in most komedya, and is here resolved by a miracle, so that the play ends in assuring harmony, order restored, all being right with the world.

We note that the disharmony occurs only in parent-child relationships, in matters relating to war and religion, and never in love or the man-woman relationship. Love in the komedya is never disrupted by disappointment, disillusionment, a change of mind, disagreement, or any of the problems attendant to it in the real world. It is only disrupted temporarily by separation, which is unwilling, unwelcome,

and unable to affect the continuance of the love. Love is constant and for always—and stable. Even though Leandro's disobedience to his father causes his imprisonment and Miramar's humiliating return home (which she unsuccessfully tries to hide from the court in order to stave off war), the lovers do not give up or forget, but wait for fate to reunite them somehow. The way taken is passive, but it is the way of faith, a knowing that all will be righted in the end. Love between man and woman is obviously the higher order, beyond rifts, and for its harmonious consummation the komedya wheels of war, reconciliation, miracle, and event turn.

*Staging as Gesture.* The staging practices and conventions, which to its audiences *make* the komedya (much as royalty, love and war do) constitute the gestures of komedya language, the physical dimension that completes its expression.

The first gesture would be the stage itself. The San Dionisio komedya stage is fixed, a concrete platform perpendicular to the chapel, and quite possibly one of the largest in the Philippines.<sup>18</sup> Its floor is of earth, for the sake of the fighting and tumbling, the fainting of queens and princesses, and the death-falls of warriors. The palace structure is built every year. Even though for "Princesa Miramar" it was not the usual grand edifice, it was still divided into the usual two sides, each one with tower, exit-entrance door, and painted windows and balconies, the Moro side red and the Christian side blue, with the imperative royal balcony for torneo and parade viewing in the middle. Here is the standard division, the separateness between Moro and Christian kingdoms, which is a separateness in mind and attitude, as well as a staging convenience (one's identity being clarified by the door from which one emerges). The separateness, however, is only illusory (the royal balcony is jointly owned, and backstage there are no divisions) and temporary (only till the denouement). This also suggests the fact that to the Filipino, the difference between Moro and Christian is not ideological, but defined by externals (costume, baptism, stage manner), and easily dissolved.

18. Komedya stages are usually made of wood and temporary, built for the fiesta in the plaza in center of town, in an open field, a churchyard, or in an empty lot. They are usually small, with a painted backdrop representing the castles of Moro and Cristiano, one door for each. If the troupe has more than one *telon* (painted backdrop), there may be a *telong gubat* representing a forest, a *telong hardin* representing a garden, or even a *telong palasyo* representing palace interiors. The cloth *telon* divides acting space from backstage, which is often used as dressing room space. The stage is usually open at the sides, so that audiences can view the play from the sides as well, and even sometimes from the stage, since there is no attempt at, or pretense of, realism.

On the right of the palasyo is a papier mache mountain with a ramp (hidden by papier mache rocks) leading upward to danger, to battle. On the left is a narrow path, an exit to parts unknown. A forest or garden (consisting of two or three potted plants and a bench when called for) is brought in as needed. In this play it is often needed, since it is in the forest-garden-mountain that animals, giants, and bandits lurk, from which princesses or friends or brothers are to be rescued. It is in the garden that princesses in disguise rest, are discovered by princes who challenge them to fight, and who then fall in love when their gender is discovered. It is in forest and garden that love is declared and accepted.

The court (three chairs with high carved backs, borrowed from a patron's home) is also brought in as needed for fiery embahada (Salimar is given a rattan chair to overturn in anger), for Felipo's declarations of anger and displeasure, for summoning soldiers, generals and princes and dispatching them on missions, for proclaiming royal decrees. It is also in this palace/courtyard (the chairs disappear) that tournaments are conducted, paseo paraded, and battles fought.

This division in function between palace/courtyard and forest/garden/mountain reflects a belief still expressed in contemporary, consciously literary (as against folk) Philippine literature: That the country, the outdoors, are benevolent, places of goodness, love, rest, pleasant meetings, kindness, and rescue, where danger is quickly overcome. The palace (now the city), on the other hand, is the home of intrigue, cruelty, the loss of traditional values, and conflict.

A very prominent gesture is the marching with which almost every entrance and exit is made. No one walks on or off the stage in a komedya, except for the few ordinary mortals. In "Princesa Miramar" only the two giants, the three bandits, and an occasional messenger walked. (The giants lumbered in.) All the others marched to music in a particular pattern: in through the proper entrance (red or blue), straight down to the foot of the stage, pause and turn, down the whole front of the stage to the other corner, then diagonally (a short cut used in this play to replace marching along front and side perimeters, perhaps to speed up the play) to upstage center, where royalty waited, and could be approached by courtiers. The process was reversed for an exit. Felipo and Graturko and their courts entered or exited to a march, with a step-pause-step-pause "regal" walk (except when Felipo was helped out in illness). Almost all the others used a brisk *paso doble*, marching in a lively, showy two-step, except when the Sultan and his Moro soldiers entered or exited without any princesses. Then they did so in a special sideways, cross-

over step devised for them (arms folded in Moro arrogance), used only in San Dionisio.

The marching is meant to convey the idea of distance, of a long grand entry which perhaps at the beginning was dimly associated with palatial corridors. Its non-ordinariness, however, also says that these are "royalty," special people a cut above ordinary mortals (*bilyanos*, not being of noble birth, never march, unless they are really princes in disguise), whose comings and goings are grand, dignified, interesting, important. Then too, the march or *paso doble* is a kind of preening, a posturing, a show demonstrative of flair and skill. A good "marcher" gives the viewer the kind of thrill one might feel at the entry of toreadors into a bullring, or at the performance of an outstanding dancer on a dancefloor of plodders. The bravura is gesticulation, a statement of the komedya actor's attitude. He is on show, he is having fun, he is enjoying a moment of glory before his friends and neighbors. This is he in costume and splendor, and although he is only pretending to be someone else without hiding his real identity (one Moro was introduced in the *presentasyon* as brother to the hermano; a Christian was known to everyone as son to a man who usually played Sultan, but was campaigning that night for a political position), today he is special. It is an attitude and stance similar to, perhaps derivative of, that in the *duplo* or verbal joust, a grandiloquent role-playing that is great fun, a glorious game in which actors and audience know the "rules" and participate together. It is a nonverbal declamation, and also the opening or closing move in a game, since the entrance or exit always marks the beginning or end of a scene, there being no formal divisions at all in "Princesa Miramar."

Much the same spirit is to be found in, and the same statement to be heard from, the *paseo*, which is a San Dionisio specialty. It is found at the beginning of "Princesa Miramar," right after the torneo, and before the ensuant complications—anger, revenge, war, Moro-Cristiano love. The *paseo* has no role in the story, but is simply a flourish, a display, being a series of marching patterns to music: figure eights, chains, circles, lines with spears held diagonally to form a canopy, or swords held downward point-to-point. This involves all Moro and Christian soldiers, the two lines led by marching masters who cue each other with a look, and thread the lines in and out and around each other in intricate, precisely sequenced patterns.

The *paseo* is a favorite with the audience, even though it has part in neither love nor war. It demonstrates marching prowess, grace, and pageantry. The continuous changing of patterns thrills because

of the intricacy and skill. Again, the nonverbal declaration being made is: "Look at me—us—aren't we splendid; isn't it fun?" The sense of being on show, of having a "brief shining moment," is shared with the audience—their friends and neighbors when they are not, as now, center stage and in full color.

The *batalya*, described earlier, starts with posturing, stances and sword-twirling, and at that point has the same intentions as *marcha* and *paseo*. When the actual fighting begins, however, the skill with the sword, the fierceness with dagger and spear or barehanded, the throws and falls, Leandro's willingness to take on all the Moros at the same time, all speak of the concepts of bravery or heroism earlier outlined: honor, gallantry, physical bravery, a willingness to stand to the limit.

Costume is an indispensable gesture in the komedya. First of all, it makes a color statement at the outset. Those in red, orange, pink, fuschia (the "screaming" colors) are Moros. Those in sober black, navy blue, dark green or purple are Christians. The colors suggest that they have values and morals to match. This has immediate reference to the fact that in the komedya of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in most twentieth century komedya as well, the Christians were always good and victorious, the Moros always evil and defeated. The sober colors are dignified and fit for Christians. The bright colors are brash and suitable to the mustachioed Moros. Even though "Princesa Miramar" departs from this formula by having as villain a Christian king, the color statement remains, and is a means of instantly placing the actor in context by identifying the side he is on.

All costumes are brightly decorated, because of the folk understanding of the splendor proper to royalty. The Christian costumes are especially spangled. The sequins, beads, devices (birds, swords, coats of arms in folk interpretation) embroidered on the jackets (formerly of velvet) and capes (short for soldiers, longer for kings and princes) and three-cornered hats; the fringes and frills and feathers; the "medals," gold braid and epaulets not only give proof of Parañaque expertise,<sup>19</sup> but also interpret the regard for Christian royalty and knights, and the folk idea of royal splendor: glitter, adornment, the extraordinary. Splendid too are the costumes of the Moros: turbans, plumes, bright striped "skirts" on the red jackets, decoration dictated by fancy and fantasy. Here the statement is of a

19. Parañaque is one of the centers of fine embroidery done on *jusi* (silk) and *piña* (pineapple fiber) and now on ramie and synthetic fabrics for export, for women's clothing and table linen, and for the man's shirt, the *barong Tagalog*.

somewhat barbaric splendor that goes with the mustaches, the kris-shaped swords, and the haughty hands-on-hips arrogance of the infidel of imagination.

The queens and princesses are dressed in whatever is the current fashion for evening gowns (tulle, chiffon, georgette in various silhouettes) but always embroidered, sparkling, sumptuous. The ladies having been chosen not only for beauty but for the family's capacity and willingness to spend on costumes, these are a matter of import in the San Dionisio komedya community. The design, color and decoration of the royal ladies' costumes are closely guarded secrets that are only revealed on stage to the waiting community. If possible (it is often made possible by parents and other benefactors) the princesses change costume with every scene. Even their disguises of men's clothing (tight-fitting pants, jacket, boots, hat, cape) which they wear to go on embahada, to battle, or to seek brother or sweetheart, are as glittering, and just as often changed.

The women in the komedya are the focus of attention and of dreams of beauty. They reflect the folk understanding of elegance, wealth, and royal magnificence; of the unattainable, beyond life's quotidian, on which to pin one's dreams. This is why it is important that the princess be courted in royal manner, won, and married to a prince. Because dreams must always end happily ever after, since life does not. The frills, glitter and embroidery are the trappings of a royalty imagined and drawn in fantasy.

Other gestures include the dagger in left and sword in right hand, the imperative town band playing music to march and fight by, the balcony from which torneo and paseo are viewed above the crowd, with the court partaking of "royal" fare like softdrinks and fried chicken, the painted ornamentation on the palasyo, the costumes of giants and highwaymen, the need to disguise (and discover) one prince as bilyano. All might be analyzed to explore further what is important and not important, what is said and unsaid in the komedya.

Readily revealing, however, is the final major gesture: the *punto* or style of delivery of the lines. All the major characters, especially royalty, do the *dicho* or recitation in traditional manner, with a particular lilt and rhythm, pausing at the sixth-syllable caesura, at the end of each line, longer at the end of the second line which makes a complete clause, and finally at the end of the stanza, where the sentence closes. Even the *diktador*, or prompter, who is almost as audible as the actors (he feeds all lines, since these are not memorized), prompts in this manner and with the intonation.



The *punto* serves the practical purpose of making the lines understandable even when there is no microphone, and when the crowds stretch out into fields and streets. The stock phrases, given in regular rhythm, with a steady pace established by the pauses, make the lines intelligible even to the viewer seated some distance from the stage, or only half-attentive to the words since he is simultaneously taking in the spectacle, identifying townmates in their new splendor, and perhaps reminiscing with his neighbor about princesses of yesteryears.

The lilt and rhythm are more than practical, however. They are intentionally different from ordinary speech, since they are elevated, even grandiloquent. This speech is special and follows different rules because it belongs to a game, to high fooling, to a dreamworld. It is fun, befitting the fiesta at which a komedya is usually held,<sup>20</sup> the celebration in which the neighbors/actors are playing at not being themselves, but extraordinary beings in a dream game. Also of course, the lines are verse, not the speech of ordinary mortals.

Komedyas used to be written in eight-syllable lines as well as twelve-syllable lines, but recently the latter, called *plosa*, has come to be the standard komedya line. In "Princesa Miramar," only the two giants, Atomih and Agawih, speak octo-syllabic lines, and deliver them in a manner close to that of everyday speech. The *pusong* or clown in other plays is usually allowed to improvise, and often does so in prose. Otherwise, there is no prose at all in the komedya, and thus no "ordinary speech."<sup>21</sup>

*Production.* Production as gesture speaks of the San Dionisio community's understanding of the play as drama, its perception of the komedya as theater form, and especially its regard for it in relation to community life. The willing involvement of the committee of older komedyante, of the current actors, of the director and stage crew, of the donors of time, money and materials, and of the audience who attend rehearsals and performances, shows that "Princesa Miramar" or any other komedya is not just a play put up for entertainment or celebration, or even for San Dionisio.

20. Religious plays are usually pegged to religious feasts (e.g. the *sinakulo* to Holy Week). The komedya is usually staged to celebrate the feasts of patron saints, especially when these occur in the Philippine summer (April and May), when the weather is good and favorable for outdoor theatre.

21. Verse is native to Philippine drama. It is found in religious plays like the *sinakulo* (on the life and passion of Christ) and the *tibag* (on the finding of the Holy Cross), in the songs of the *sarswela*, even in the political plays (called "seditious" by the Americans) right after the Philippine-American War (1902-1906). The content and rhythms of ordinary speech came with the semi-realistic melodramas and *sarswelas*.

On the level of drama, there is an effort to be faithful to the author's words, to present the play as he meant it to be, to thrill with battle and love scenes, to weave the threads in proper order towards a tranquil denouement. Some editing is done on the script, but it is minimal, and there is never any attempt to read beyond it, or to give it new meaning or reinterpretation. This is because it expresses a world expected, familiar, and desired, even when recognizably not real. The audience shares this spirit by weeping, laughing, teasing, occasionally applauding. There is often no final applause, because identification and approbation are expressed in more personal ways—clapping the director on the back, climbing up the stage to talk to cast and crew, complimenting the sponsor, talking about next year's komedya.

On the level of theatre, the production is planned to enhance all the theatrical elements that audiences usually enjoy in a komedya. The stage is built for the specific play's exits and entrances, battle and tournament scenes, miracles and apparitions, leaps and falls. Blocking and costuming emphasize the audience-pleasers: battles, court splendor, love scenes, marching, clowning. Even when new stage techniques are introduced (spotlights, narrators, background music on discs or tapes), they are used to enhance the elements that make a komedya a komedya, that provide visual splendor and a sense of celebration.

It is on the community level, however, that the production is most significant. This is because in the San Dionisio komedya, the whole barrio acts as producer for the play. The stage is built with bamboo and wood lent, donated, or paid for by donated funds. Labor is mostly donated as a *panata* or promise to the saint. The committee of former komedyante which supervises funding, casting, rehearsing, costuming, the gathering of props, refreshments on rehearsal and performance nights, actual presentation, as well as backstage and house discipline, work for no pay and very little glory. If asked, they would probably say that it is for San Dionisio, and for the komedya which they have known since childhood (*kinagisnan* is the usual term, meaning something to which they woke at birth), but beneath both these motives is the fact that it is for the community to which they belong. They bridge the donors and the audience, through the komedya.<sup>22</sup>

22. A thorough study of the komedya in San Dionisio (history, texts, production) and the history of the komedya in the Philippines, is found in Nicanor G. Tiongson, "Kasaysayan at Estetika ng Komedya sa Parañaque," (doctoral dissertation, University of the Philippines, 1979), and *Kasaysayan ng Komedya sa Pilipinas* (Manila: De La Salle University, 1982).

The funding of a komedya, as already indicated, comes from a sponsor, significantly called *hermano mayor* or "older brother," since what he is doing is a brotherly act that, although it may net him good will, prestige, and even actual profits, is originally motivated by his belonging to a community in which he was one of the lucky ones able to give patronage. Like an older brother, he shares his goods.

The result of this is that there is little division between performers and viewers, actors and audience. The latter feel that the production is their project too, since they do not pay admission fees, but contribute money, or work, or at least presence. They know that the play was set up for all of them as truly as it was for the Saint. It is not only the absence of stage realism that allows the audience to wander and eat (the area is ringed with food stalls set up for the fiesta) and chat. It is also the sense of community celebration. Nor is the production seen by itself, as an individual project. It is instead part of a continuum, reminiscent of komedya past, predictive of komedya to come, with both always within the frame of reference. Komedya production is quite simply part of San Dionisio life—part of the veneration of the patron saint, part of the sharing of brothers, part of the recognition of individuals in the consolidation of a community.

## CONCLUSION

All the above—the values stated or implied in the text of "Princesa Miramar," the gestures constituted by the elements of staging and production, the interior, referential world of komedya history and conventions and literary-dramatic form, and the exterior world of Barrio San Dionisio, Parañaque, which is the social framework of the text—constitute three concentric spheres (core, interior, exterior) that build on and build up a world of order.

*Dangal* and *galang*, honor and respect, are the foundation stones of this world. Their violation produces disorder and conflict. The thwarting of Haring Felipe's wishes by Leandro (seen by the former as a lack of respect), and the sully of Princesa Miramar's honor by rejection in Albanya, cause Leandro's imprisonment, the lovers' separation, and war between Persia/Arabia and Albanya. Order is restored only when honor and respect are reasserted. Leandro ends his sulk and goes to battle beside his mother. The lovers are united. Felipe is repentant. A miracle smooths out all other attendant complications.

The two principal activities in the komedya—love and war—build on honor and respect. This makes falling in love simple, instant and lineal, with marriage the natural development. This also makes separation unnatural and disorderly, and therefore painful, unthinkable, out of normal order. Love is without wavering. Lovers are never separated by change or conflicts, only by such external factors as parental disapproval, religious differences, and fortuitous circumstances. Thus love always has to be in order at the end of the play, the lovers married or about to be and, as the komedya expression goes, "mapapalagay sa tahimik" (soon to be ensconced in tranquility).

Interestingly, love is the initial impulse towards disorder, since it is usually the impossibility of Moro-Christian marriages that triggers filial conflict, ambassadorial challenges and negotiations, and war. Yet love is also the impulse to order. Its working out is the principal concern that leads towards the denouement. In "Princesa Miramar" it is shown to be a higher ordering principle than religion. Nobody argues with Haring Felipe on the point of difference between Moros and Christians, but his refusal to accept love as able to order the difference and the excess of which he repents is an overzealous interpretation of this. As his children remind him:

Moro ma't Kristiano sa gawang pag-ibig	Moro or Christian, in the matter of love
dapat na igalang ang sa pusung nais.	the heart's wishes should be respected.

Love, the higher order, negates the lower, and is the path to all harmony:

... ang pag-ibig siyang laging daan	... it is love which becomes the way
Nang pagkakasundo nitong	to agreement in the whole
sang-tinakpan.	human race.)

Even in more traditional komedya, where the Moro-Christian question is not as liberally regarded, love is always between Christian and Moro, and the ordering of this seeming contradiction takes up all the play's energies, till the final resolution in conversion and marriage. For love is order, and must be obeyed.

War is definitely disorder, fun though it may seem. But it is a means to order. Through it, disrespect, insult, and sullied honor are avenged and righted, rifts and divisions healed. Leandro, for example, is shaken out of his sulk by the realization that:

Aba ng palad ko, aba kapalaran	O such misfortune, O my sad fate,
sampo ng Ina ko sa aki'y nagdamdam,	even my mother now feels hurt by me;
saan pa hahanga yaring abang buhay	where else can my lowly life go now,
sa dinadanas ko na napakarawal	with this ignominy I am experiencing

May sama man ako ng loob kay  
Ama  
diko matitiis ang mahal kong Ina

Even if I should have ill feelings towards  
my father,  
I cannot stand my mother's displeasure

Division between mother and son is not right. Their relationship is obviously of a higher order than that between father and son. A son may feel anger against his father for just cause, but what cause could there be to be angry with one's mother? And so Leandro goes to war, trying to protect his mother while not hurting Miramar's father. Wars in the komedya are never fought for imperialistic purposes, to gain territories or subjects, not because of feuds or alliances. The causes of komedya war are always definite and personal: a daughter or husband or (in the case of Salimar) a niece to avenge, love to be made possible in the long run. One makes war because one loves, and war—in *this* world—makes the fruition of love possible.

Beauty and bravery are part of love or of its objects, and therefore they are in order. Villainy subverts the order of human relationships between lovers, parent-child, ruler-subject, person-person by lies, deceit, treachery, its mildest description being *lihis sa magandang asal*—not in good form, deviant from that which is correct and proper, not in order.

Both love and war (komedya "violence") may be said to occur in a purely rhetorical register. First of all, the protagonists are not anchored in the real Philippine world, but in an imagined Europe. Secondly, the feelings expressed and the words used in the expression are oft-heard and so familiar that one does not have to ponder meanings, and indeed has no time to do so, as dodecasyllabic lines tumble out in relentless rhyme and rhythm. Thirdly and most importantly, what the audience relishes is the deliciousness of the rhetoric (the flowers of language plucked from familiar gardens, the physical flourishes of chivalry that are exclamations of splendor) and its orderly march towards resolution. With the rhetoric unmoored from reality, there is no confrontation with consequences, responsibility, or meaning.

If war is trouble and disorder, so are transgressions against form. The Mantenedor and soldiers do not like Leandro's entering the torneo, because victory had been declared as won by Madrago. Miramar protests, because the form had been revised when the Sultan granted Leandro permission to join. There is a brief altercation between Rondal and Rogardin when the latter relays the Sultan's command, and the former, dallying with Salimar, does not obey immediately. Leandro's disagreement with his mother is a worse transgression

against form (values) than that with his father. Felipo's anger is not only caused by his son's love for a Christian princess, but by his participation in a Muslim torneo, which he sees as not proper form.

Harmony is not stated but implied, perhaps because the abstract concept has no name in the Tagalog language. *Pagkakasundo*, coming to an agreement, comes close, and thus the importance of harmony is emphasized by all the statements of agreement, the unity of purpose and intention, the dislike of conflict and disagreement, the pain of separation, the repentance for excesses. Harmony is order, and it is restored in a very physical way at the end of "Princesa Miramar." First Leandro and Miramar, the separated lovers, are reunited. Then Florita and Rolante are united with their mother Carmela (Leandro had already joined her in battle), and Ramir and Armida with their mother Salimar. Miramar then takes Leandro to her father Sultan Graturko, and they beg his forgiveness. Leandro then takes her to his mother Carmela. The three betrothed pairs—Leandro-Miramar, Ramir-Florita, and Rolante-Armida—then kneel before their mother Carmela and ask that she forgive any wrong they may have committed. With harmony thus restored, Leandro suggests that they shout "Viva" (long live . . .) because of *ang pagkakasundo nating kalahatan*—the agreement (harmony) among all of them.

Also indicative of the value of order are the physical gestures: the ceremonious entries and exits of each *kaharian*, the patterns of the paseo and of marching, the structure and rules of the torneo, the ritual of the batalya preparations, positions and process, the division by costume color, door used, style of marching, the length of verse lines and fragments and the placing of pauses, the division of activities for palace/courtyard and for forest/garden/mountain, the fact that princes generally only do batalya with other princes or generals, kings with sultans, and the rank and file with each other, and the fact that princesses wear men's clothing when they venture forth (since form and order dictate that well-brought-up young ladies stay home, and thus can only leave home and palace, fight, conduct embahada in manly disguise).

The komedya world is order, because disorder is (as Felipo is often reminded) against God's command:

Ama ay isipin, kayo po'y magnilay  
sa batas ng Diyos kayo'y  
nasisinsay  
nahan ang pangako sa sangkatauhan  
na pairalin yaong katarungan?

Think, father; you should reflect on  
how you are deviating from the law  
of God;  
where is your promise to your kingdom  
that you would make right prevail?

<p>Tandaan mo yaong kasabihan          kapag magmalabis sa panunungkulan          hindi magtatagal, at magkaka-hanggan          pilit na babagsak, pagdating nang araw.</p>	<p>You must remember the saying          that when one goes beyond his position          he will not last, and in the end          will have to fall, when the time comes.</p>
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Excess is deviant from rule and established policy (*lihis sa regla't mga kalakaran*), and ends in destruction. Disorder is seen in the chair overturned in the anger of an embahada's threat and counter-threat, in disharmony between parent-child, monarch-subject, in the separation of lovers, in war and religious difference. But order is always restored. The chair is righted, the parted and angry reconciled or repentant or even miraculously revived, the infidel baptized, and lovers (tried by the fire of problems, conflicts and separation) finally placed in tranquility.

The reading of this principal concern—order—in this or any other komedya, and the comprehension of its nuances, is done by exploring beneath words that have lost their sharpness and currency because of having been reshaped by use and dulled by convention. It is done by recognizing convention as code, the staying power of which signifies a continuing validity as signal. It is done by considering the word of the text and the gestures of staging and production as bonded, inseparable elements in the speaking; by viewing "Princesa Miramar" as three concentric worlds: that in which Leandro and Miramar love and marry (*core*), that shaped by the komedya as drama and theatre form with allusions, references and ghosts gathered through two centuries (*interior*), and that of San Dionisio as physical, geographical, political and historical entity (*exterior*), as community devoted to Tata Dune, a father and patron saint with whom his people communicate commitment through the yearly komedya.

All three worlds—core, interior, and exterior—must revolve and rotate in concentricity, simultaneously and separately. The text is only the merest beginning, for love and war are more than they seem.