

Nicole Revel

Heroic Characters as Models of Leaders in Philippine Oral Epics

Each language creates the world through words, logic, abstract orders and the mediation of symbols. Each language captures the human universe, seizes it and reconstructs it by thought and by cultural views. Each society has an interpretative presence, a particular creation that the people try to make their own both empirically and intellectually in order to ensure survival and happiness. Each culture has its own worldview, reveals an interpretation of life according to an ethic, a rhetoric, and an aesthetics. The specific space of communication we propose to consider is the space of orality.

As an anthropologist, I shall attempt to understand collective and cultural views, not the mental representations nor the mental images which psychologists try to apprehend. I shall rather focus on an ensemble of ideas and values fundamental to a society, always partially or semi-consciously present in the mind of the people. To go, in an analytical way, to the core of a story, is also to go to the core of things, exploring all the latitudes of meaning. One would hope to gain access to hidden meanings, to the features of leadership and the identity of the group that the poetry exalts. An analysis of an oral/aural composition, a long sung narrative, and the spatio-temporal and socio-cultural framework which creates it leads to these hidden meanings. I propose to focus upon three distinct traditions of Southern Philippines.

1. Heroic character as a model of leadership in Talaandig-Bukidnon Epic Tradition: *ulaging*

In Northern-Central Mindanao, a landscape of high plateau opens at 900 feet above sea level, with higher yet hills scattered therein. This plateau is the ancestral land of Bukidnon people and of several Manobo groups. The plateau is bounded by Cagayan de Oro and Misamis Oriental to the North, by North Cotabato and Davao to the South, the Province of Agusan on the East and Lanao del Sur on the West. In the Bukidnon-Cotabato-Lanao borders reside Manobo groups with two distinct languages, Eastern Manobo and Western Manobo, while on the plateau, people speak Binukid and call themselves “Bukidnon”. The first monograph reporting these groups titled “The Bukidnon of Mindanao” by Fay-Cooper Cole refers to their customs and their songs [Cole 1956].

During the second half of the 20th century, after several decades of anthropological, sociological and linguistic research, together with folklore studies, several epics in this area of the Philippines were collected and published. They resulted from the efforts of father Bernad SJ in “Kinaadman” (Wisdom), at Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro, together with “Silliman Journal” at the University by the same name in Dumaguete; and others by San Carlos University in Cebu, by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), and the Linguistic Society of the Philippines. More were published by the University of the Philippines (UP) as well as Ateneo de Manila University Press, in Quezon City.

As my colleagues and I continued to collect epics we found that there is one major epic, or *ulaging* in Bukidnon and Central Mindanao; this epic has the heroic figure “Great *Agyu*”. The *ulaging* may be conceived as a “macro-epic” following A. Manuel’s typology [Manuel 1963]. But, in contrast to the epics of the Itneg of Northern Luzon, it is not made of several “micro-epics”, or rather short but complex sung narratives, lasting from 1h 30 minutes to 2h, as N.A. Respicios found out among the Itneg [Respicios 2005: 126–127]. Each *ulaging* is a long sung narrative, lasting the whole night and can be considered as one episode of this extensive mosaic that the macro-epic is making up among the Talaandig-Bukidnon and the Manobos.

Extensive inquiry and safeguarding of epics was conducted from Silliman, first by Elena Maquiso and her close collaborators, in particular a Manobo Datuq, who dedicated much of his life to the transcription and translation of the *uwaging* among the Manobos in Cotabato and Bukidnon. Following Maquiso, extensive work on oral traditions was conducted by Father Fran-

cisco Demetrio S.J and Museo de Oro staff at Xavier University, Ludivina R. Opeña [Opeña 1972] and Joy Fernandez. Also, as a young man, Victorino Saway studied anthropology at Silliman, collaborated with Dr. José Maceda in UP, and published several works. He welcomed me together with his sister I. Llesis-Saway, today the archivist at Xavier Museum, his mother Baqi Kinulintang and the whole kindred in Sungkoq. This occurred just after Datuq Kinulintang had passed away. We then started a long-lasting collaboration.

I suggest that we look at this epic as a vast mosaic where Great Agyu stands as the model of a leader. I feel we are not yet able to list, as of today, the many components that make up this extensive epic. To reconstruct it is indeed a challenging puzzle. The epic is not linear, with chronological episodes, like in a Maranao *darangen*, but rather an ensemble of long episodes of distinct narratives, making up a constellation around Agyu and a panorama of the life of his kins and affines, the Immortals in the Calm Realm, *Nalandangan*.

Agyu is, however, sang by other groups such as the Ilianen, as the epic recorded and published in 1969, by Dr. A. Manuel, attests. It is referred to by the Manobo Umayamnen, at Loreto (Agusan del Sur Province), by the Banwaon of San Luis, Pulangihon-Umayamnen (Agusan del Sur, at the junction with Bukidnon); by the groups Kirenteken of Carmen in North Cotabato and by the Manobos of Libungan and Pigkawayain (Maguindanao Province). The fieldwork and manuscript of two *uwaging* in progress, one by Rita Cembrano and another one by Jose Buenconsejo attest the above today.

Ulaging or *olaging*, *uwaging*, *uweging*, and *uwahigen*, according to the dialect, designates the epic genre. The genre is a long sung narrative performed at night, telling the heroic stories of Agyu and his extensive kindred. The characters, *ulagingen*, surrounding him, related to him, and interacting with him make up both one and many sub-plots. These epic characters are often present and are referred to in folktales, or *nanangen*, where they are narrated in prose, *mantukaw*. The characters also appear or are referred to in proverbs and wise sayings, *basahanan*.

I shall focus on the *ulaging* genre. Here the metrical composition is very sophisticated, made of heptasyllabic or octosyllabic verses. It opens with a *pamada* or *pamara*, according to the dialect, which is a call, an invocation to the Guardian Spirits, or to the singer's master, to the guardians of the voice, so that he will be inspired and will keep a beautiful and strong voice the whole night long.

The plot unfolds in distichs with a powerful capacity to describe, to evoke with an extensive array of synonyms, of parallelisms and chiasms, a singing

process in pairs highly valorized. The *sala*, sung by another person, allows the singer of tale to make a pause. But he can also be the one to sing the *sala*, revealing to his audience his personal metaphysical thoughts and psychological moods very moving to listen to and to understand.

The epic provides the people with an understanding of the ideal community life, revealing the magnificent testimony of the “Place of Peace”, *Nalandangan*, the ultimate secure fortress, on top of the mountain and the place of Immortals. *Nalandangan* is at the same time a “Place of Supreme Peace” and the “Blasting Place of Thunder” and “Home of Lightening”. Its various descriptive names suggest a serene territory on the one hand, and one irreducible, inhabited by fierce warriors who face invaders, on the other hand. A model of leadership is simultaneously highlighted. Its goal is a life in harmony between kins and affines and the moral obligation to enter a fight in case of aggression. *Nalandangan* is the place where the plot has to begin and come to an end.

Sovereignty and liberty are political concepts of outmost value in the coherent and strictly organized society of *Nalandangan*. In case of aggression, it becomes an absolute goal and an inalienable hope. Bravery in confronting the invaders coming from the forts by the sea or across the seas, in past and present days, honor in resisting, fighting to preserve the territory, the homeland of Great Agyu, and to protect his peoples are the highest ideals, as Victorino Saway emphasizes [Saway 2005: 79–80].

In the epic’s uxori-local society, the people are genuinely linked to a strong and deep spirit of kinship expressed by an absolute love and respect for Agyu’s mother, who is always heard. A dedication is felt for brothers and even more so to sisters, such as *Pigsayu* (Eminent Lady), who is coordinating and heading women’s armed forces. A deep love and admiration for Agyu’s beautiful and skillful wife, “Equal-to Full-Moon”, a master in patchworks and embroideries exists, and unconditional respect is accorded to the elders, like *Pamulaw*, who gives advice on leadership. Dedication to close relatives and the whole kindred is complemented by a constant memory of the Ancestors.

Agyu stands as a model of man, strong leader, a *Datuq*. His words are a command, his actions and decisions are the law for his group. His infallible and uncontested leadership is moderated by wisdom and great dedication. He listens to advice from the elders and from his mother; he tries by all means to fulfill the desire of his sister Tabagka when she elects the God “Who-holds-Earth-in-his Hands” for a husband. She must go through three major ordeals, including sliding down under the earth, crossing a set of blades and daggers, and passing through a pair of swinging mountains.

Datuq Migketay (Researching *Datuq*), Victorino Saway has become an accomplished singer of *ulaging* as his father was. He explains how the *Agyu* epic “provides a blueprint of the present structure of Talaandig Bukidnon society” and adds “*Agyu* is a model of man. He is a person who knows very well his cultural identity. He is a firm leader who holds the authority of his leadership. He knows his territory and is always prepared to defend and secure it from the invasion of other groups. *Agyu* upholds the concepts of peace and security for a nation” [Saway 2005: 75–84].

Traditionally, as sung in the *ulaging*, the leadership structure was unitary. A sacred black stick, *giling*, was held by the leading *Datuq* who also wore a bracelet, *takalub* and a headgear, *tangkulu*, signifying his talent to solve very serious killing cases. These emblematic signs empowered him to travel far away and mediate in very tense disputes. His judgment, ability to speak, moral authority and success in setting grave cases, in fulfilling the hopes and requests of his followers, *sakup*, negotiating contracts of marriage, *kasaloq pagasawa* (eating in togetherness), and peace pacts, all functioned to increase his legitimacy. In turn, loyalty was expected of all members in a community, one *tulugan*, and a whole territory was under his rule, *tagdatuqan*, as referred to by Nestor Menaling in his thesis on Bukidnon-Pulangiyen *Datuq* leadership concepts, values and practices [Menaling 2002].

According to J. Garvan [Garvan 1931], *Datuq* was not the vernacular term for “leader” among the Manobo groups. The former titles were *bagani*, a “war chief”, and *alimaqong*, the “supreme *bagani*”, the most prestigious killer, the one who kills to avenge a wrong done to a kin and also who runs a blood feud between communities. For Manobo and Bukidnon groups of Mindanao, a *Datuq* was the leader of a local dominant kin group comprising a village community and, in times of violence, could become a *bagani*, a “warrior possessed by *Talabusaw*”, a spirit assisting the *bagani* and increasing his bravery.

On another hand, a *talamohat* is a “ritualist”, a *baylan* is a “shaman”, whose healing power is given by an *abyan* or a *diwata* who selected him. A *Datuq* could combine the capacity to lead and the capacity to heal, but the two functions are distinct and do not necessarily combine into a leader.

Datuship is not hereditary, it is rather based on merit and competence. *Datuq* were/are elected among a group of elders or candidates and this election is complemented by a series of rituals related to the spirits; for example the ritual of introduction to the *Dumalondong* guardian spirits, the *abyan* who are going to guide the *datuq* in solving cases and maintaining peace [Gatmaytan 2002]. This ability in settling cases, *paghusay*, in being a fair and

just arbiter, is also related to their guidance and several progressive steps in accessing the function, which is also discussed by L. R. Opeña [2005 : 33–34)].

A powerful spiritual guidance is cultivated by the Nalandangan heroic characters-*ulagingen* so that they keep or regain their strength, fame, integrity and glory in freedom. Victorino Saway and Irene Llesis-Saway have recorded, transcribed and translated seven *ulaging* singing Great Agyu. This extensive work was done with the cooperation of women and men singers of tales in Bukidnon, with my guidance for establishing the first manuscripts. These episodes of Agyu are:

- *Dayan dayang ta Yandang* (Gem of the Calm Realm),
- *Tumulin Ko Kayamag* (Strong Wind) (published in *Kinaadman*, 2002, vol. II)
- *Nabayaw ha Dayuen* (Praised Sun),
- *Bunuanen Kagwasen* (Handsome Jolly Man)
- *Nikinuyug Sakilay* (Beautiful Eyebrow Line)
- *Pigsayuq*

Excerpt
from “*Dayan-Dayan Ta Yandang*”
(Gem of the Calm Realm)

A Radiant Maiden Appears to a Young Datu

<p><i>Na dini ta bunsudani Yangku dini tultula ha Dagat Naduluna ta bulibu Batal ta Pusud Linaw Yangku duun tultula Nag panalimbal da lisen Dun yan tagdalahuta bag linduwang inpulta Iyan da su subay din hu kan-u gaid anlawa kang gaid nabayaw.</i></p>	<p><i>hu Dagat Maaneg-egen ta Layagen ha Naguwat ha Nakinuyug. sa Layagen ha Naguwat sa Dagat ha Nakinuyug ta magayun datu haan hu pinakabug ha bangku hu batangan ha bangku tag gawa hu inbintana hag dagandan sa mayantaw hag dasen sa masalunay</i></p>
--	---

*Na sigin imu datu ka
 ha inu sa nabelengan nu.
 Sa sugun sa nalulunhaw
 Nadadalisay gaid
 Na ganin ha maanlagan kad.
 Na daw makalengay-lengay
 Daw makagayeng-gayeng
 Intagpi din hu kagra
 Inhagaw-hagawang ka
 Nag binusung sag bunsudan
 hu kadinag hu mayantaw ...*

We shall begin our story
 We shall start our tale
 with the flowing seas...
 Bounded by a whirlpool
 Round about a lake's navel
 I will sing the story
 who was sitting cross-legged
 He was seated relaxed
 He was looking by the window
 These words he muttered:
 "When might be the day,
 Shall it be at noontime,

"My dear young Datu,
 What makes you wonder?
 Perhaps an immortal one
 Maybe an Immortal being
 When you were touched
 The one looking through the
 The one looking through the slit
 Then he tapped his chest,
 He touched his heart,

The lawn was also glittering,
 a radiant Lady..."

*na inu sa naindan nu
 sa gulumbuy sa maanlag
 sa tambuay maulantaw*

*sag linduwang hu inpulta
 sag gawa hu inbintana
 tag aninggahan hu yanu
 tag anlagan hu kadinag
 ganin nag inanlagan ad en*

in the Rumbling Sea
 in the Rushing Ocean

was the Rushing Ocean
 were the Flowing Seas
 of a young Datu
 on an elevated bench
 on a high bench
 he was gazing through the slit

when a lady might come?
 when the maiden comes?"

what enralls you?

is shining below?
 is glittering below?
 by the rays of light...
 window walked elegantly,
 walked gracefully,
 as a light touched him
 as he was struck by the rays
 of a light

"I am now in presence of

2. Heroic character as a model of leader in Sama Dilaut Epic Tradition: *kata-kata*

Nomadic boat-dwelling peoples in the Islands Southeast Asia were an extensive ensemble of distinct ethnolinguistic groups made up of three different historico-socio-cultural sub-sets [Sather 1997]. The *Moken* and *Moklen* are scattered in the Mergui Archipelago along the coasts of Burma and Thailand. The various *Suku Orang Laut*, groups of seafaring nomads were found along the Malacca Strait and Riau. People with this way of life are also found along the northeast coast of Borneo and the Sulu Sea, off Sulawesi, near Western Halmahera going as far as Roti in Eastern Indonesia, and as far as offshore Arnhem Land in Northern Australia.

Following World War II, Sama Dilaut were gathering sea products on coral gardens between the Sulu archipelago and Celebes Sea, along the north of Borneo and in the Strait of Balabac. Today in the Southern Philippines some Sama Dilaut are still semi-nomadic, but most of them are sedentarized and Islamized. In Samporna and Sandakan (Sabah), some nomadic Sama people are still dwelling on boats, while others are living in villages on stilts. Because of the war in the South of the Philippines in the nineteen seventies, they became refugees from the near-by Sulu and Tawi-Tawi archipelagoes.

For the Sama Dilaut, fleeing, displacement, change and “an old theme in Sulu history and dates back to the arrival of the Taosug in Jolo” (See [Nimmo 1986; Nimmo 2001; Palessen 1985]). As anthropologists and linguists, J. Rixhon, A. Arce, K. Palessen, H. Arlo Nimmo, A. Martenot, C. Sather and I have observed the increasing presence of Taosug and Sama over the ancient coral territories of the Sama Dilaut. Pressure on the sea nomads is unquestionable. As Nimmo concludes in his latest book, “Tawi-Tawi Sama Dilaut can no longer escape the forces of change and are becoming part of an extending Muslim Sama culture” [Nimmo 2001].

Haji Musa Malabong and A. Martenot have recorded and video-taped several *kata-kata* performances among the Sama Dilaut of Sitangkai in 1975–76, and in 1995. Subsequently, I have continued the work of safeguarding and translation *in situ* of four epics, namely:

- “*Jairatul Allah*”
- “*Si Pagdatuqan Ma Duya maka si Kumulah-Intan*”
- “*Si Mahammad- Jambagan maka si Sinag-Buwahan*”
- “*Silungan Baltapa*”

Talib Sangogot and I recorded this *kata-kata* in Tubig Dayang (Princess Water), South Ubian, on October 22, 1997. This narrative sings the quest and love of a Sama Dilaut hero for his faultless wife *Mussaqa Dalmata* (Unique Pearl) and his trip to Heaven, Hell and Paradise, in the quest for her as she departed after having given birth to their son, *Datu' Mu'min* (Believing Datuq), who therefore became an orphan. A parallel story of an orphan is found in H. Arlo Nimmo's book appendix with "*Amilbagsa*" [Nimmo 2001].

Djins or *jins* are mediums and shamans. They are able to communicate with the spirits, *Saitan*, to conduct cures and certain rituals. They must find the cause of a disease or of bad luck. While they cure close to the patient and in the presence of his kin, they are calling, invoking the spirits and singing a *kata-kata*. They have to control magic spells, be knowledgeable in medicinal plants, and have the gift or ability to master and sing an elaborate repertoire.

For Sama Dilaut, *kata-kata* are extremely sacred sung narratives, known in Samporna as *suli-suli jin* for they belong to the Ancestors' realm, *Mbo'*. These chanting sessions are able to heal the sick at the psychic level, as their beauty has the power to please and appease the ancestors. Strictly memorized, *kata-kata* have to be performed without mistakes, in order not to commit offences. They are transmitted by mediums, who include men and women. Taught by a mother to her son, the apprenticeship is rigorous and cannot start before adulthood nor before the birth of a first child.

Sambahakan, a sung prelude, opens the chanted narrative and is briefly repeated after each pause. The story unfolds over one, two or three hours at night time, it can be continued on the following evening if the shaman/medium thinks it is necessary. He is lying on mats on the floor, beside the patient. This sacred performance also has the power to chase away the *Saitan* causing sickness or misfortune and to allow the patient to recover. A singing healing session *suli-suli jin acts* as an exorcism. The kindred present is silently attentive, whispering rather than speaking, and noisy children are kept away.

References to Islam are obviously present in "*Silungan Baltapa*" as well as in other *kata-kata*. However the fundamental theme is the loving relationship between husband and wife when their first baby is born, together with the relationship to the ancestors, the souls of the departed ones, which are "a continuing source of love, support and ideals transported in death to a new level of being". "Leaving the living world, the deceased becomes a transcendental personality, escaping forever the contingent time of earthly life and death and so returns to the original ancestors created by Tuhan. They survive through their offsprings, provided that the latter remember and honor them" [Sather, 1997].

The living relatives visit and talk to the ancestral spirits, and offer them some quids, cigarettes, perfumes and pennants. The spirits are asked for assistance, protection and support during, for example, a fishing venture, or to cope with the daily difficulties in their lives. The visitations occur by their tombs, *tampat*, in island-cemeteries such as Bilatan in Panglima Sugala or Sitangkaï [Martenot 1994; Martenot 2005]. *Amakan sumagat*, “feeding the soul”, is a ritual to comfort the deceased, a communion to renew the ties between the living and the ancestors, and acts to reactivate their virtual presence in living memories. As the *jin* has a direct relation with a personal spirit-helper, “each person has a direct link with the “souls of the ancestors,” *Kemboq-ëmboqan*, who uphold the moral order and visit their descendants with punishment in the event of wrongdoing”.

Conjugal love, physical and moral beauty of the hero and his beloved wife, loyalty and courage of the spirit-sister and a highly prized maternal love are fundamental values among Sama Dilaot. The nuclear family unit, the delicate and devoted love of a son or a sister, and respect are present in dyadic relations: mother-son, mother-daughter, sister-brother, daughter-mother, husband-wife, and mother-father-child are particularly intense and express the *Addat*, the moral code and code of behaviour.

Husband-wife relations are bound by “love and affection”, *kasilasa* (<skt : *rasa*), and an “intense physical longing”, *makahansul atai*. “Compassion, mutual help and concern”, *maqaseq*, are strong bonds, because husbands and wives have complementary activities within the house group and at sea. A sense of responsibility and a “sensitivity to obligation of reciprocity” *magbuddi*, is very needed for the survival of their nuclear family.

Infants, *ondeq-ondeq*, and children are objects of intense affection and constant care by their parents, with an open expression of feelings by both mother and father. No one is more pitied than orphans, *ilug*, and a childless couple or parents who have lost children in infancy. Among siblings love has to be always marked by respect to an elder brother or sister, for such is the principal leader and spokesperson for the younger siblings. Consanguineal ties often take over the affinal ties. Marriage, however, opens a series of siblings-in-law relationships which are very precious and assure “mutual help”, *tabang-manabang*. Gifts and return gifts create a social and cosmic web involving kins and affines, neighbors and friends, the living and the ancestors, people, spirits and *Tuhan*, the supreme deity.

Around the heroic couple, *Silungan Baltapa* (Meditating-in-a-Refuge) and *Mussqa Dalmata* (the Only Pearl), the story unfolds with four pauses providing the main parts of the narrative. Principal characters include the hero’s

mother, *Ugbusan Sahaya* (Source of Light) and his sister, *Muslim Magkapala* (Supreme Muslim Lady), the unique newly born son of the couple, *Datu' Mu'min* (Faithful-Datuq). Also present are the helper of the hero, the servant of his mother, the *Nuli* birds, omens and messengers, the tiny cockatoo carrying the *santol* fruit, and the enemies, *Datu' Misil Balan* (All-Powerful-Iron-Datuq), Pirates, and the two huge *Galura* birds.

In 210 stanzas (49 pages in *sinama*) the plot unfolds. In Part I and II, after the prelude, the *wali jin* sings the initiatic Voyage of the hero made up of five trips (on earth, in the sky, on earth) and five fights (on the sea, on earth and in the sky). In Part III, the *wali jin* sings the about beauty of the pregnant wife, about her desires always fulfilled and the birth of a son, gifted, as is his father, with supernatural power.

As the wife passes away three weeks after giving birth, the laments and funeral ceremony are described (stanza 137, p. 32). Then the Voyage to the Hereafter takes place (stanzas 154–185, p. 37). The reference to the “*Judgment of the Ladder*” (stanza 169, p. 40) opens part V and celebrates God’s appearance and the teaching of His healing, which is redemption. The mystical quest for Silungan Baltapa’s wife in Hell and Paradise marks the last part of the *kata-kata* and reveals the sublimation of a deep earthly love.

The model is that of the spiritual Voyage of Muhammad ascending to Heaven, the hero’s night voyage to Heaven and his final prayer to Almighty God to be granted with the gift of the redeeming souls in order to bring back to earth his beloved, sinless wife. Then husband and wife meet again, after which follows two separate Journeys of return to earth, to the “Island of Grace and Love”, the maternal island. Then comes the moment of performing the proper healing ritual, invoking the name of God. This episode is followed by the awakening of *Mussaqa* and the recovered happiness of conjugal love. The epic closes on the image of maternity.

The epic “*Silungan Baltapa*” is part of the stories on the theme of the Ascent to Heaven which are influenced by the narration of “*The Book of the Ladder*”, *Liber Scalae*, just as the *kata-kata* “*Amilbangsa*” sung in 1966, recorded and summarized by H. Arlo Nimmo [Nimmo 2000: 234–244].

According to the singer of tales, Silungan Baltapa is a Muslim believer who has passed the test of the Judgment of the Ladder. This is why he is allowed to see the suffering experienced by the sinners in Hell, then to proceed to Paradise in quest of his wife where they meet under the shade of a huge tree. He persuades her to return to Earth, for he has committed no sin. God grants to the accomplished and successful hero his most cherished wish, to bring the “soul”, *nyawa*, of his beloved wife back to earth.

Pre-Islamic components remain, especially the very powerful interpersonal relationship at the core of the nuclear family and of the closest kindred, that is the siblings and their affines, *ipal* and *bilas*, which Nimmo calls “the family alliance unit.” The *Pagmunda* is a group of boats traveling or mooring together. It is not a corporate group, for each family remains independent of the larger unit, as Nimmo clarifies. A group of married siblings are usually found moored together and assisting one another in work and ceremonies.

Sama Dilaut leadership *nakura*, or *anakura* (Sibutu dialect), is inherited from the father as a former *nakura*. A man acts as a “leader” of a temporarily formed unit, but will relinquish his leadership to his son or his son-in-law as he becomes older. In this nomadic and/or semi-sedentary society, leaders are never permanent. The ideal pattern is to align with siblings, but leadership is likely constantly changing. A *nakura* emerges according to the contexts and the activities, through innate personal qualities and a charismatic personality, and by demonstration of skills and masteries in fishing, boatbuilding, and so on.

Sama Dilaut leadership is subject to change, just as all positions are subject to change and just as the composition of the family alliance unit changes because of the frequent movements of the nuclear families over the sea. Nowadays, because of sedentarization, instead of sailing away, parties in dispute must try to reconcile.

In a sedentary settlement like Bangau-Bangau in Sampornah, as observed in 1979-80 by C. Sather, every senior house-leader is expected to have a knowledge of *Addat*, the Customary Law, and to use it to settle disputes between his followers. This is something akin to a *Panglimaq*, an arbiter as found among the Palawan people, as we shall see later, but with less permanence. Among the Sama Dilaut, the *nakura* can act and decide as a *Hukum*, a Judge.

Among the Bajau Laut *Addat* is taken into account in highly personalized terms for it is linked with natural phenomena, good health or disease, well-being, and good or bad luck. Hence if dissensions and disputes are part of human existence among sea dwelling groups, one solution to trouble is to leave instead of fighting. In such cases, the family units are constantly recomposing, while among the sedentary coastal groups submitting to conciliation is appropriate in order to avoid calamity, sickness and dangers for oneself and/or one’s kins.

Addat is distinct from *Agama* as the former deals with personal habits, behaviors and interpersonal relationships, while the latter deals with respect of the rules of rituals, prayers and propitiation. “*Addat* embodies more general moral values and provides a measure by which personal conduct may be judged in moral terms” [Sather 1997].

Excerpts from
 “*Silungan Baltara*”

The Journey to Heaven of a Beloving Sama Husband

E - - - q
O, sahabbat, maingga ka anganaw?
O, ari aqa dunya
o, bantug ia pasumba
lual ia kawasa
palimbang min - - - - Allah - - - -
uy,uy,uy,uy,uy,- - - u-u-u-u - - - i.

Halam beneaq-beaq
pinaragan na kuraq
ni sindung kayu langa
ubus peqen tomecca
masindung kayu langa
ni engkotan na kuraq na
Silungan datuq langka
boq na maglenga-lenga
tuy mag - pu - - lak - - mata -
uy,uy,uy,uy,uy, - - u-u-u-u - - - i.

E - - - q
Si Mussaq denda pataq
poteq lumaras kassaq
lollon pette mamaq
o, maglalepan tendaq
min kollong anggautaq
si panaw kelong-kelong
gaqi ta toman rongdong
subai ni laman patong
minsan manekot lendung
tahi - nang du - -u - - so - letong - -
uy,uy,uy,uy,uy, - u-u-u-u- -i.

E - - - q
la lapal bahasa
o, Silungan datuq langka
dayang ėmbanan nu ru aku
ari dangan-dangan ku
endaqun giq baran ku

E - - - q
She asked the angels around her:
“Oh, Angels, what are you looking for?
Oh, someone from Earth
is coming
to offer a supplication
whose power is uniquely
granted by God.”
uy,uy,uy,uy,uy,- -u-u-u-u - -i.

She did not listen.
She rode her horse on a gallop
to the shade of the tall Tree.
When she reached
the shade of the tall Tree,
she tethered the horse.
Silungan, the demanding Datu’,
looked around searching.
Then their eyes met.
uy,uy,uy,uy,uy, - -u-u-u-u - i.

E - - - q
Mussa’, the lovely lady
with a white complexion
as transparent as glass,
Oh, with lips as red
as the juice of the quid,
with veins on the neck
as an undulating ribbon,
walked so gracefully.

She was glowing so brilliantly,
 one could not catch a glimpse of her,
 even with a furtive glance
 from a shaded place
 uy,uy,uy,uy,uy, - u-u-u-u- - i.

E - - - q
 Silungan, the demanding Datu',
 said:
 "Beloved, you have left me
 in such loneliness.
 Look at me
 I became so thin,
 deeply worried and
 longing for you!"
 uy,uy,uy,uy,uy, - u-u-u-u- - -i.

3. Heroic character as a model of leader in Palawan Epic Tradition: *tutul*

Since 1970 among the Palawan Highlanders, I have shared the beautiful experience of many long sung narratives. The experience has inspired many of my works. It has also been the starting point for many quests and queries, and various further research in the Philippines and in the Nusantara area.

In contrast to Talaandig-Bukidnon whose social organization is closer to the hierarchical pattern of the Tagbanuwa, the Palawan have an egalitarian society, where the notion of *pägibutän*, "the one who has followers", *mängingibut*, is prevalent. A leader is also chosen as a judge, *ukum*, for his competence in resolving cases, in setting up contracts and agreements, *maqupakat*. In recent years the word *pänglima* is used instead of *pägibutän*. Oral history tells us that they had to kneel on both knees and shake hands with a handkerchief to honor a *Datuq* — a title below *Sultan* and *Raja*, in Muslim hierarchy. This is a gesture expressing an "oath of allegiance", *mämälök*. There are *Pänglima* confederating seven to eight hamlets or groups of neighbors, *säng kärurung*. A hamlet, *rurungan*, or *sitio* in modern administrative terms, is a group of five to ten houses composed of nuclear families under the responsibility of an elder, *mägurang*, a man who is the father or the uncle of a group of sisters and/or first cousins assimilated to classificatory sisters. His

role is to maintain peace and harmony between kin and affines, mainly between the sisters and their husbands. As a matter of fact, his sons-in-law come to “paste” *adat üt mämikit*, and are *de facto* under his control because of the uxorilocality rule. When too old, this man shall withdraw and a younger, but mature and talented man shall take the responsibility and assume the role of arbiter in the hamlet.

In order to become *pänglimaq*, one has to master the *adat*, the Customary Law. One has to be able to think and discuss, using very elaborated figures of speech, so as to elegantly solve the various daily disputes and conflicts, *banta*, and make agreements, *isun*, in the local group and between neighboring groups.

The “*Kudaman*” epic which was the first epic I heard and subsequently partly published in 1983 (the 2nd of seven nights) illustrates this style in “leading” a group as the plot is progressively building up a sororal polygamy and the repetitive confrontation with raiders coming from the high sea to abduct, *mägagaw*, the hero’s wives.

The exemplary behavior the *pänglimaq* embodies is one of a very quiet, but extremely handsome and seductive person, and one gifted with magical powers. He is modest, *mäqasip üt ibang taw*, and calm, two necessary qualities when dealing with very aggressive and hegemonic pirates, *Ilanän* and *Bangingiq*, coming from Mindanao, Sulu or Borneo. This is a tactical device coupled with another very much needed and highly valorized quality in this ancient socio-cultural context, self-control as he endures, *mäsandal*. For *Kudaman* is confronted by the arrogant and aggressive, *mäqisäg*, pirates, *Ilanän*, who used to come to the coasts of Palawan to raid, *kumandäw* and enslave the people, *mänguripän*, capturing them, *agawän üt taw*, for labor force and profit.

Another important quality for a Palawan “model of man” is to avoid physical violence by all possible means; to negotiate peacefully, to think and discuss elegantly *mägbisara*, instead of entering the fight, a moral mistake. As a matter of fact, to disobey the law of the supernatural powers or of the people, *mälbi*, and use violence, *käqisägan*, is not only wrong towards the others but especially towards *Ämpuq*, the “Weaver of the World”, *Nägsalad*, and towards other forces, *Upuq Kuyäw*, “Grandfather Thunder” for instance, as it is sung in “*Mämiminbin*” [Revel 2000].

Excerpt from “Mämiminbin”

A Shamanic Voyage towards Grandfather Thunder

*Hin atin känyä baq dingganän yä nä näpäspuk säntin tibat
kilat lang ät palad tikäd
Had kunuq täyän tibat kumintas näng sulburan in bä.
Atin nägkantar lang duqut päntaran ni Upuq Kuyäw in.*

*Hin änu takuq känyä si Labit banar näglänlahyun suminläd
pitung lapis duräng linägdangan yä bä.
Hin atin kunuq bä.*

*Hin sugiran ku bä ikäw misan lingkäp mu nga lungsud atin
täyän kunuq ibutän tä nga ikäw in bä.
Hin känyä baq dingganän yä nä näpäspuk säntin
Hin kidlap lang ät palad tikäd kunuq bä.*

*Hin atin näng limas nägä ät bituwän atin sarung ät ängkap
ät bälänsyung yä känyä diki närusapan ät mämaqan in bä.
Tibat mägtiyäg lagi duqut dyämbutan ni Upuq Kuyäw batän dimu bä.*

*Hin atin änu takuq känyä kwan ni Upuq Kuyäw dyangan bä kwantin in bä.
Hin mägisun tä ät mänunga sälus.
Na si Upuq dyangan mägbunuq täyän dimu bä.
Känyä bä isyän yä säputangan yä ägapän yä nä lamang Upuq yä bä.*

*Hin batän baq riyasan yä nä säntin päringan rurupanan ät upuq yä
änu takuq ryaban mu
Hu känyä nägkänrub lang дәläg kunuq in.
Inamulan näga ät дәläg ulu ni Upuq Kuyäw in bä.*

At this very moment, Labit hurls himself [in space],
the soles of his feet are like flashes of lightning.
The story says, he flies as straight as a swarm of bees.
You can hear only the sound of his feet landing on the entrance platform
of Grandfather Thunder's abode...

And what do you think happened to him?
Labit went up and entered straight into the abode and went through the
seven levels.
So the story tells us.

I tell you that even if you go around the world, I will still try to catch you.
As for him, he instantly shot into space.
From the soles of his feet come flashes of lightning, the story says.

The sheath of his sword touches the stars
And he has not even chewed a quid...
It is as if he has always been standing there on the entrance platform
of Grandfather Thunder's abode.

What is going on? says Grandfather Thunder. Don't act like this.
Let us come to an amicable agreement!
My Grandson, stop making war. That is my wish.
He took his scarf and went up to the young man.

And when he fanned the young man's face with his scarf,
what do you think he was sweeping away?
The story tells us that there was rumbling, there were flames.
Grandfather Thunder's head is engulfed in flames.

Over six nights (in particular during the 1st and 2nd nights), the “*Kudaman*” epic presents several blood pacts, *sängduguq*, sealed, an exemplary tactic for dismissing and neutralizing rivalry and potential conflicts. With the pact comes the obligation to make a gift of personal belongings (either a dagger, a sword or a ring) and unfailing loyalty, as well as the obligation to receive a return gift. This is part of the “custom of sharing”, *adat üt pägbagi* and *pagkäsi-käsiq*, a “tie of affection”.

In the epic the hero pretends to accept the idea of “sharing” all of his wives with the pirates. In fact, he has no such intention. This is a subterfuge, an art to avoid conflict, *bulagän üt bunuq*, in silent disagreement, *mägbiling*. However by an elegant address to his wives, he appeases their anxiety and foils of his adversaries. Hence, in order to avoid conflict, everyone has to act and sound silent and polite.

However, in the case of “wives stealing” and adultery, war is inevitable. But the hero will be the last to enter the fight. His behavior towards his enemies will be as a generous, peaceful and compassionate “model of man”, dismissing violence and aggression. In order to become friendly the former enemies will make an offering of gongs, *mägungsud üt agung*.

Excerpt from
“*Kudaman*”

K. Hin sinu-sinu tipusäd ku dakän atin ipasäwa ku päsi dakän atin äsawa ku in.

Hin sägwaq mägbunuq kaj ga mändiq ku bäng banar mägsalaq ku si it Nägsalad in Kudaman in.

T. P. *Hin dakän mänä bä dagbäs ni Tuwan Putliq dakän ari pinägtawan kä dakän änu takuq tägdupang dakän in.*

Hin kädjä batän bä dimju ämbä lang kunuq sälus bäng äpat djä bäng banar

kaja na lang itimbagmu bulanan mung bäng banar in

Hin mägdapraj mänäbang banarin sälus

Hin lujuq üt mata djä pägbalukän djä mänä tuq in.

L.K. *Hin ari Linamin kunuq üt Käginuwan misan kunuq pänarimsim in. Hin dakän kwan jä dimu sälus baq gasi bäng ukanän bäng banar märaq üt baq kisju mägäripuru in tägäjän sju lang in.*

K. “I too looked for wives. To all those who are my brothers, I would give to wife my own wives.
But to war is what I absolutely forbid, otherwise, I would be committing a mistake against the Weaver of the World”, says Kudaman.

T.P. “As for me, says Tuwan Putliq, my husband, why would I behave badly?”
As for them, all four of them, how could one get rid of one or let go of another.
Their charming eyes are overwhelming and truly they are full of grace.

L.G. The Lady of Ginuqu Tree says: “It does not matter, elder sister, it would be just as badly seen if we were discourteous. Let us see”.

(Pp. 122–123)

Concluding remarks

I have taken into account three different national cultural communities from Mindanao, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan which represent indigenous animist groups now being Christianized or Islamized. I observed that “leadership” has different forms and modalities within the three groups in spite of similar favored affinity systems, namely a symmetrical exchange and uxoriality rule. From strongly held leadership, with Datuship, and “Great *Agyu*” as the reference among Talaandig-Bukidnon and Manobos groups, to the fluid, impermanent and flexible leadership exemplified by the *nakura* among the Sama Dilaut, there is a clear distinction in the very notion and exercise of leadership. One is conflict and war oriented, the other is fleeing, avoiding violence and conflict. With the *Pägibutän* or later the *Pänglimaq* among the Palawan, who’s leader and headman arbiter of the hamlet rather than a leader in a stricter sense, comes another way of answering the question of how a society can be regulated coherently and harmoniously in order to control and eventually totally avoid violence.

I foresee that many other answers would come to light if we would explore the views about leadership among the Subanun, the Tagbanuwa, the T'boli, the Kinaraya, the Maranao, the Tausug, the Maguindanao, the Ifugao, the Kalinga, the Itneg, through their social organization, Customary Law, and ethics as conveyed by the long sung narratives.

References

- Cole*, Fay Cooper 1956. The Bukidnon of Mindanao.
- Gatmaytan*, Augusto B. 2002. The Manobos of Agusan del Sur: Notes on Datuship // Building Bridges: The Development of a Leadership Training Program for Indigenous Youth. Children and Youth Foundation, Makati, pp. 21–35.
- Garvan*, John M. 1931. The Manobos of Mindanao. United States Government Printing office, Washington.
- Macdonald*, Charles 1977. Une Société simple. Parenté et Résidence chez les Palawan (Philippines). Institut d'Ethnologie, Paris.
- Manuel*, Arsenio E. 1973. Manuvu Social Organization. University of the Philippines, Quezon City.
- Manuel*, Arsenio E. 1969. Agyu: The Ilianon Epic of Mindanao. University of Santo-Tomas Press.
- Maquiso*, Elena 1969, The Ulahingan, a Manobo Epic. Silliman Journal, Vol. 16, n. 3, pp. 227–238; Vol. 16, n. 4, pp. 360–374.
- Menaling*, Nestor 2002. Bukidnon-Pulangiyen Datuq Leadership System. Unpublished MA Thesis, Ateneo de Manila.
- Nimmo*, Harry Arlo 2001. Magosaha. An Ethnography of the Tawi-Tawi Sama Dilaut. Ateneo University Press.
- Opeña*, Ludivina Ravidas 2005. Polygamy, Family Life and Tribal Culture among the Bukidnon. Kinaadman, Vol. XXVII, pp. 25–36.
- Respicio*, Norma A. 2005. Dulimaman, the Itneg Epic. // Literature of Voice. Epics in the Philippines, Nicole Revel ed. Ateneo de Manila University, Office of the President Publication, Distributed by Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City. 34 photos and video disk, pp. 125–146.
- Revel-Macdonald*, Nicole 1983. Kudaman. Une épopée Palawan chantée par Usuj, La Haye/Paris, Mouton, Les Cahiers de l'Homme), 385 p., 11 illustr. A. Fer, 1 disque 33t.
- Revel-Macdonald*, Nicole 1992. Kudaman, Isang Epikong Palawan na Inawit ni Usuy. Traduction de E. B. Maranan et N. Revel-Macdonald, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, 401 p.
- Revel*, Nicole 2000. La quête en épouse. Mämiminbin. Une épopée palawan chantée par Mäsinu / The Quest for a Wife. A Palawan epic sung by Mäsinu, Paris, Editions UNESCO, Langues & Mondes-L'Asiathèque. 440 p., [édition trilingue palawan-français-anglais], 1 CD, illustrations graphiques, 8 photos de Quincy Castillo.

Revel, Nicole 1993. Problématique de l'épopée. Routes terrestres et maritimes // Les Routes de la Soie. Patrimoine commun, identités plurielles, UNESCO, Collection Mémoire des Peuples, pp. 99–109. 1996b,

Revel, Nicole 1996. Kudaman. Oral Epic in the Palawan Highland // L. Honko, special ed. Oral Tradition 11/1 (October 1996): “*Epics Along the Silk Roads*”, pp. 108–132.

Revel, Nicole 1998. “C’est comme dans un rêve...” Épopées et chamanisme de chasse. Ile de Palawan. Philippines // Diogène, numéro thématique: “Les Épopées, Littératures de la Voix”, n° 181, pp. 7–21.

Revel, Nicole 1998. “As if in a Dream...”: Epics and Shamanism among Hunters. Palawan Island, the Philippines // Diogenes. “Epics: Literatures of Voice”, N 181, vol. 46/1, 159 p. Berghahn Books, New York-Oxford, pp. 7–30.

Revel, Nicole 1998. “Épopées: Littératures de la voix”, Diogène, Revue internationale des Sciences humaines, n. 181, janvier-mars, 136 p.

Revel, Nicole *Diogenes*, “*Epics Literatures of Voice*”, Number 181, vol. 46/1, 1998, Berghahn Books, New York. Oxford, 159 p. Ed. en arabe, 2000; en chinois, 2001.

Revel, Nicole 1999. Epic singing in Palawan Highlands (Philippines), vocal and musical styles // *Inter-cultural Music Studies*, vol. 11, K. Reichl (ed.). [International Workshop on Epics: Performance and Music, 7–10 September 1997], Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, (VWB) Berlin, pp. 191–210, 10 illus.

Revel, Nicole 2001. The Teaching of the Ancestors. Conference on “Literature of Voice: Epics in the Philippines // Philippines Studies, and in Budhi, Ateneo Research Publications, Quezon City, pp.183–195.

Revel, Nicole and D. Rey-Hulman, eds. 1993. Pour une Anthropologie des Voix. INALCO-L'Harmattan, Paris, 375 p.

Revel, Nicole, ed. 1993. Épopées. Cahiers de Litterature Orale n. 32, INALCO, Mars, Paris, 205 p.

Revel, Nicole, ed. 2005. Literature of Voice. Epics in the Philippines. Ateneo de Manila University, Office of the President Publication. Distributed by Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, 236 p., 34 photos and video disk.

Revel, Nicole and Mäsinu Intaräy 2003. Littératures de la voix 1: Le chant d'une épopée palawan. Mäminbin. CDROM trilingue (Palawan/Français/English). Conception & Réalisation: Nicole Revel. Programmeur: M Jacobson, LACITO. Liens d'Hypertexte: C. Michelet, Ph. Grison. Production: LMS, CNRS-Images, Meudon.

Revel, Nicole 2005, en collaboration avec H. Arlo Nimmo, A. Martenot, G. Rixhon, T. Sangogot, O. Tourny, *Le Voyage au ciel d'un héros Sama / The Voyage to Heaven of a Sama Hero*. Silungan Baltapa, Geuthner (édition trilingue: Sinama, français, anglais). Paris, 370 p., 4 photos noir et blanc, 1 DVD video (1 fichier son: le chant en intégrale + 1 diaporama de 110 photos couleurs montées en 72 planches accompagnées d'un récit en français et en anglais). Gérard Rixhon

Rixhon, Gérard 2005. A Journey into Sama Literature // Literature of Voice. Epics in the Philippines, N. Revel ed., Ateneo de Manila University, Office of the Presi-

dent Publication. Distributed by Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, 34 photos and video disk, pp. 23–58.

Sangogot, Talib Lim 2005. Tawi-Tawi Sama Voice // Literature of Voice. Epics in the Philippines, N. Revel ed., Ateneo de Manila University, Office of the President Publication. Distributed by Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, 34 photos and video disk, pp.59–73.

Talib Sangogot, Haja Masaqat Sangogot, Haji Musa Malabong, Alain Martenot, Nicole Revel: 1995–2000, Typescripts of several epics from the Sama, the Sama Dilaut and Taosug in Tawi-Tawi, Ateneo Oral Epics Archives, Quezon City.

Sather, Clifford 1997. The Bajau Laut. Adaptation, History, and Fate in a Maritime Fishing Society of South-eastern Sabah. Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press.

Victorino Saway, Irene Llessis-Saway, Nicole Revel 1993–2004. Typescripts of seven epics of Agyu cycle. Ateneo Oral Epics Archives, Quezon City.