TABI-TABI PO: SITUATING THE NARRATIVE OF SUPERNATURAL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PHILIPPINES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Folklore, such as the narratives of the supernatural, functions as a vehicle for elements of culture such as belief systems, ideologies and shared memories. This study explores the changes undergone by Philippine narratives of the supernatural vis-à-vis the urban development of the community where they thrive. It is demonstrated that the characters of the narratives of the supernatural are perceived to be of equal or even higher stature than those of members of the rural communities. With the locality experience changes brought about by urbanisation, this folklore is inevitably modified to suit the people's environment and sensibilities, by reappropriating new functions and roles in the community. A different impression is observed in the context of the urban community; but, the collective sense of respect evoked by the urban dwellers has endured. This is the form which the latent belief system among Filipinos has taken, one that forges their common identity.

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Introduction

The steady flow of population, which is usually brought about by the diaspora-oriented behaviour of some people due to socio-economic reasons, paints a complex picture of any locality. As a result, it is inevitable to rethink the concept of "community" because of the ever-changing composition of the geographic space. From the sociolinguistic notion of community (Labov 1966 and Corder 1973), which indicates a spatial interconnectedness among members through a shared speech tradition, the definition of community has been reshaped to mean a social group that is held together by a "shared dimension of experience" (Saville-Troike 2003: 15) and "frequency of social interaction patterns" (Gumperz 1968: 463). This reappropriation responds to the recent phenomenon whereby advancements in technology have not only hastened communication but have also bridged the geographical gaps among different peoples and, consequently, various cultures.

Seeing culture as an adaptive mechanism of human beings that becomes their way of life, it is interesting, then, to explore how the elements of culture respond to rapid and constant changes in the social and geographic space. Shared memories, for instance, are assimilated because of the incorporation of new knowledge and experience. These memories, which are encapsulated in various material and immaterial cultural artefacts, such as rituals and folklores, are in effect, a rich source of data as regards the people's beliefs, customs, traditions and value systems. With this in mind, this paper attempts to investigate the interrelationship between community development, packaged within the term urbanisation, in the

Philippine milieu and how some dimensions of shared memory among its members have been reshaped by changes in their lifestyle. Emphasis will be given to current narratives which are considered 'folkloric'.

Folklore consists of narratives which are common to a community and are retold between members. Often, through word of mouth, these narratives are passed on from one storyteller to a listener, who later on becomes the new storyteller. One theme of folklore are narratives of the supernatural, tales in which the plot typically includes human beings interacting with those from the other-world.

The corpus that is to be analysed for the urban folklore is from the *True Philippine Ghost Stories* (TPGS) series published between 2002 and 2006. It is a collection of narratives of the supernatural experienced or retold by contributors from all over the country. It should be noted that most, if not all the stories published in the series, have been extracted from the larger corpus of stories of the said type on the World Wide Web. The question of a story's authenticity as "folklore" and not having been simply "written" by a writer may be debatable but it is arguably an effective means of relaying horror narratives. This is expounded below whereby the series relevance to the landscape of folklore studies in the Philippines is significant. Although it has to be questioned that this particular series has as great an impact as the whole genre the TPGS series had been selected due to the length of its publication period while others were discontinued or had irregular intervals of release.

As this is a contextual study, the milieu of urbanisation in the Philippines is presented as is a subsequent discussion of the effect on the multicultural nature of Philippine ethnolinguistic picture. It is within this area that the development of horror narratives has become consequential but with the curious lingering of a latent conceptual belief of man, nature and spirits being co-existent.

Folklore as an expression of shared belief

Animism, or anitism, is a persistent belief among the different ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines (Delbeke 1928; Covar 1998; and Tatel 2005). It is a belief system that perceives the elements of nature to contain a spirit that coexists with a physical body, similar to the nature of the human being. This facet of Filipino cosmology is expressed through its concept of *kaluluwa,* or the life spirit. The death of a person, based on pre-colonial cosmology, entails his spirit departing from its corporeal counterpart and most likely traveling along a river into the afterlife (Alcina 1668; Magos 1986). It is also noteworthy that the term *kaluluwa* is a cognate of the term *dalawa* 'two,' which implies co-existence with the corporeal body. Apart from the spirits of nature and of men, there are also supernatural creatures which 'co-dwell' with the former. Together they belong to an endless maintenance of balance through a process of give and take. For this reason, believers perceive eventualities as blessings or punishments, depending on how they have behaved in the eyes of the supernatural. A balance is normally kept through the process known as ritual, which, in this context, is defined as "...a transactional event that binds the individuals of a given community and the inhabitants of the spirit world together in a web of memory, with notions of responsibility and the primary value of survival and well-being or in a continued existence via ideas or

conceptualizations of "balance"" (Hussin 2013: 1). The established relationship between humans and the spirits of the elements of their community is manifested as follows:

> "The relationship between humans and spirits is governed by explicit rules, primarily regarding land use. Humans must first ask their permission before cutting down, their tree-abodes, burning their mountains, or destroying their anthills. In order to plant or build on their territory, or even to pass through it, one has to recite a formula or perform a ritual. According to native theory, failure to observe these rules will result in physiological illness, insanity, or death." (Ramos 1971b: 64)

The Filipinos' respect to their surroundings is manifested in their regard of themselves as mere co-inhabitants of the locality, along with nature and supernatural beings (Hussin and Santamaria 2008). They acknowledge territories even of those which they cannot see. This high regard of nature is sometimes seen by others as paganism (Tatel 2005), or the worship of inanimate things but the belief that spirits lurk around one's surroundings results in their revering, and not venerating, nature.

What this reflects is the relationship between man and nature: parts of nature, animals and plants, become the dwelling places of spirits where they manifest their influence. Filipinos acknowledge the forces that surround them and on whom they depend for their well-being and/or misfortune (Delbeke, 1928). Acknowledgment of these forces drives Filipinos to pay utmost respect to nature and the spirits that live within it. This

is, furthermore, equated to *banal na takot;* a kind of fear that is fuelled by the inability to act in accordance with the spiritual exchange of benevolence and harm.

The social control of the narratives that contain the abovementioned world-view is consequently bound by tradition. Viewing the world as something that also has life has had an impact on Filipino medical ideology. Tan (1987) classifies this into three categories: (1) personalistic, which involves sickness due to soul loss; (2) mystical, which involves sickness that is caused by sorcery and spirits; and (3) naturalistic, which involves sickness due to stress and infection. Medical ideology not only involves how people view the causes of sickness it is a way of seeing how a community views the world itself and this point to the acknowledgment of communities in the Philippines that the world is alive and can affect humans, sometimes in ways that can cause harm.

What is observable in this reading of history and culture is that there is a sort of a struggle between humans and the spirits and supernatural creatures. There is a power relation for everything that is in this world and even beyond it. Cannell (1999) inquired into this relationship. What was observed with the Bicolanos was that in order for them to live in harmony with the spirits, whether the latter are of lower or higher origin, people had to pay respect to them. Rituals are a large part of the paying of respect, e.g., offering prayers, having séance conversations with the dead to let a spirit and its family make peace with each other so as to vanquish whatever it is that might hinder the spirit from going on to the afterlife. If these rituals are not accomplished, the spirits and creatures may cause harm to humans. This is how

the power relation is manifested as a social control for people to avoid doing harm to nature and everywhere else and the narratives are the effective means of conveying the social control across the communities.

The aforementioned twelve categories that Ramos (1990) supplies verify this. All of the creatures, whether they are of colonial influence or not, were made to be substantiate the view of the people that everything is connected through their spirits. The *engkanto* lives in the woods, caves, and stony places. The *dwende* lives essentially in trees. The *aswang* are bound to the earth. The *Kapre* and *tikbalang* live far from the dwellings of people suggesting places untouched by humans. The *sirena* lives in streams and other bodies of water. The other categories such as the *mangkukulam* are also dependent on the earth in order that the spirit of nature for their sorcery may work.

There are many manifestations of the supernatural creatures in different ethnolinguistic groups. Cannell (1999), for instance, presents in an ethnography of Bicol the different manifestations of the belief in spirits. There are 'spirits of men', the *tawo;* 'the spirit of the recently dead', or *kalag*; and those that are 'harmful [beings]' such as the *aswang.* This world-view is not limited to the Bicolanos; in fact, throughout the archipelago, many other ethnolinguistic groups present similar ideas to those presented above, among other creatures of the metaphysical world. Licauco (2000) mentions three general classifications of such beings: lesser spirits, supernatural beings and a supreme being. Meanwhile, Ramos (1990) mentions 85 and classifies them into twelve groups: demons, dragons, dwarfs, elves, ghouls, giants, merfolk, ogres, vampires, viscera suckers, weredogs, and witches. He uses the term "lower mythology" for these creatures (p. *x*). The linguistic diversity of the Philippines dictates that some of the creatures are called by various names in the respective etholinguistic community, for example, the Tagalog *bangungot*, a dark fat man who lies on top of people who have overeaten is called *batibat* among the Ilokanos. Another creature is the *manananggal* of the Tagalog, a woman-like creature that can detach her torso from her limbs and fly to prey on people, is called *wakwak* by the Visayans. This type of classification is also used by Pacis (2005) in her inquiry into the modern retelling of Tagalog narratives.

A similar typology of such spirits or *anito* is affirmed by Demetrio, Cordero-Fernando, and Zialcita (1991). The *anito*s are entities that have a life force; those that belong in higher mythology are called major *anitos* and minor *anito*s belong to lower mythology. Creatures of lower mythology are creatures that people believe to cause harm. This is different from those of "higher mythology" which are generally beneficial to the community (Ramos 1990). The creatures of lower folklore or mythology are ascribed to the rural setting and they are said to dwell in open fields and forests (Pacis 2005). Those of the lower mythology, as Ramos (1990) has indicated, live among humans and have feelings. If they are harmed or, offended, they can cause harm, therefore they should be appeased and befriended.

Such a belief in creatures, which dates back to the pre-colonial period, has survived beyond colonial times in spite of the fact that during the Spanish occupation, lowland communities were pacified through religion. The integration of local cosmology and that of

Catholicism is worth noting. Rafael (1988) argues that the concepts of heaven, hell and sin intruded into the belief system of the Filipinos. The new religious order was embraced but elements of the existent cosmology were incorporated. The belief in the endless predation of the *aswang* still exists even in the afterlife based on local cosmology but "heaven" is meant as an escape from this possibility.

Ramos' 1990 categorisation is based mainly on the abilities and the physical attributes of the creatures. Most of them have attributes that are non- or superhuman. The *kapre* has a part of his body that is horse, the *mananaggal* has wings, and the sizes of the giants and the elves. The ones with human attributes like the witches are portrayed as not very pleasant to look at. These creatures represent the spirit of the environment. They give physicality for the spirits so that they can be made concrete and instil images that can evoke "pure fear" instead of *banal na takot*.

The identified creatures entrenched in folklore are important to the community where they 'exist' to act as a social control: "... the beliefs in these creatures can be useful in embodying the content of education and can serve as an internalized brake on conduct" (Ramos 1971a: 180). Having the concept of power acknowledged is an effective means of maintaining the conduct of the community and holding the people back from going against tradition, which translates into a breach of the metaphysical contract. Narratives about the *kapre* getting angry when he is disturbed are evident. When the tree where he lives is cut down, he can do terrible things to the people who have caused the disturbance. Respect is projected by the performing of a ritual in

which the natural environment is central. When a mound of soil is in a field for instance, passersby will excuse themselves by praying, *tabi tabi po*, in order that they may eradicate any disturbance they may have caused to the *nuno* dwelling there. Necessarily, the traditions surrounding the creatures and their environment are sustained and transmitted to new members via the narratives.

The conditioning environment: Rural-to-urban transformation

A dichotomy of urban-rural classification is presented to deter highly intricate elaborations. These broad categories are sufficient for the discussion instead of being particular and including such a category as semi-urban, or *rurban* (Shryock et al. 1976). For the topic, urban can be determined based on population, primary economic activity, and specific laws. In the Philippines, population is the central criterion; the place must have a minimum of 2,500 inhabitants and the density should amount to 1,000 people per square mile (Siegel and Swanson, 2004). This population-based criterion is associated with other factors especially the economic activity and lifestyle of the people. Hawley (1971) further defines *urban* as both a process and a place that is vastly dependent on resources, population and the economic base. Furthermore, it refers to both: "...the whole of the organisation that is based upon a settlement which may be a city or something closely resembling a city" (ibid.); and "the quality of life that is typically found in the city" (Panopio, Cordero-MacDonald and Raymundo 1994: 323). The city is characterised as a unit of analysis consisting of a collection of buildings, activities and socially heterogeneous individuals clustered

together in a relatively large and dense space (Clark 1982 and Morris 1968). While an area is subjected to urbanisation, changes in the elements of the locality begin to take place:

> "As the population concentrates in relatively small areas in space, so the forms of social and economic structure and organization which are appropriate for rural living break down, and are replaced by new patterns and relationships more suited to urban needs. At first, these changes are restricted to and are experienced by those actually resident in the city, but over time, they diffuse to and are adopted by those living in rural areas, so that the whole of society becomes dominated by urban values, expectations and life styles." (Clark 1982: 72)

Though this may be a generalised view of urbanisation, it has somehow occurred starkly in the urban primacies of the Philippines. According to the United Nations (2002), the Philippines was one of the fastest urbanising countries when in the 1950s, only about a fourth of the country was deemed to be urban, but in 2000 this had increased to almost 60% of the country. What had brought this on was the changing economic landscape which encouraged more people to migrate into selected cities. As a consequence, the focus of somehow improved social and health amenities led to disparities between the rural and the urban spaces (Ogena 2005). What this entailed was that people in urban areas continued to increase and the lifestyle of the country was ever changing.

A densely populated area produces an alienating effect among its people. Man-made structures, for instance, not only geographically divide members of the population but they also establish interpersonal barriers (Morris 1968). Co-dwellers are literally separated from each other creating a relatively weak bond among them. Members of the community remain cramped in their own space where they live, work and undertake their regular activities.

An increase in population diversity – an indicator that the locality is undergoing or has reached urbanisation – implies that any resident would have difficulty knowing others personally. This is in contrast to rural living which is characterised by having close ties between members of the community (Clark 1982). Since people recognise their locality as being confined in a small specific town or barrio, the tendency is to know and be in constant contact with others. An interpersonal relationship is established and maintained for a long time and as long as the families stay within that specific place.

The cultural underpinnings dictate a change in the adaptive mechanisms of humans to their environment and the situation in which they exist. New ways of interaction within the population are brought about by the changes in the said mechanisms. However, as Wirth (1964) has argued, social contacts in the city are largely "impersonal, superficial, transitory and segmental" (qtd. Morris 1968: 16); therefore, the resident is more likely to regard social contacts as "means to his own ends" (p. 17). They are unable to be made contact with everyone else because of the massive number of people. That people are geographically proximal does not mean they are socially close and most social contacts in the urban setting are

rather superficial. It is only possible to build relations with few specific individuals who share similar interests and lifestyles. This is not difficult for Filipinos who come from different ethnolinguistic groups. Even though the different locations where they come from have diverse expressions of belief through oral traditions, there is still a shared core belief system that will eventually bring them closer. In relation to that paradox of population growth and members' social contacts, it is almost impossible to gather the city dwellers in a single space. Therefore, indirect communication such as via the mass media is more often relied on by residents to convey and receive information even within the locality.

The transformation of the community from rural to urban brings about drastic changes in the landscape and the culture of a society. As mentioned earlier, changes in the needs of people in an urbanising community results in an alteration in land use. The need for company in a community is replaced by the need for economic stability. One property that differentiates the urban from the rural community is what Wirth (1964) terms the *pecuniary nexus*, that is, urban people tend to see all goods and services in terms of a common standard, e.g., money. This is the implication of a widespread belief that people can be tempted to do almost any labour if the salary that they are talking about is good enough. Furthermore, due to the fact that many people are pouring over a small urbanising space, resources such as building materials, land and food and water, among other eventually become scarce and this results in competition.

For this reason, in the context of the Filipino society, alienation is not only experienced by members of the city with

one another but people are also become more and more alienated from an environment that is considered to be part of the community itself. The attitude toward it is "deep and kind" in the rural space but it is the opposite for urban spaces. The natural environment becomes somehow disregarded and becomes a "means to an end."

Metamorphosis of the narrative

The narratives about mythological creatures, as Ramos has said, "…are fast being forgotten" (1990: *xi*). The term "forgotten" may be misleading; they may not have been forgotten but are attributed to a specific setting – the rural. One reason for this is the transition of the rural space into an urban area. Most, if not all of the stories about lower mythological creatures are set in rural spaces – they live in soil mounds, trees and in mountains. Ideals are consequently changing among the people who are moving or have been exposed to the urban environment. The way they perceive their world, as expressed in the narratives, is also different because of the change in their environment. The *kapre* and the *dwende*, for instance, have lost their place in narratives that circulate in the urban environment.

Ultimately, because of the dense population brought about by urbanisation, the traditional narratives of the supernatural are not "forgotten" but, rather, are transformed. They are assigned new representations to fit the population's new environment and sensibilities. They appropriate narratives to be pertinent to their society and serve their function.

There is a shift in how people live and view the world starting from the rural and moving toward the urban; diminished or

lost interpersonal relations and familiarity with place. Since the city brings about impersonal relations among people, their alienation creates anxiety about the urban space. Not all the places are familiar for individuals and this creates a feeling that that place is not "theirs." Familiarity with place inside the city is limited and therefore uneasiness toward these places develops. Another alienating factor is the fact that it is densely populated. Too many unfamiliar faces are in the streets and they become part of the uneasiness of the unknown (Tuan 1979).

With this in perspective, there is a part of culture that becomes misplaced – the narrative. The creatures that Ramos (1967) identified do not have their space in the urban setting. One manifestation of this is that such attitudes of the rural are deemed by the educated and sophisticated urban population to be the product of ignorance and simplicity (Pacis 2005). Moreover, the uneasiness and insecurity brought about by urbanisation has in effect, signalled the appropriation of certain traditions. Narratives, which will now be called the horror narratives, operate as a way of decreasing the alienation because it tends to find a commonality between them. This tradition is channelled not by word of mouth any more but already through the mass media. The medium through which they are passed on is urbanised and belongs to the modern worlds of publication, cyberspace and telecommunications.

The corpus of these horror narratives is from TPGS series, which currently has 27 volumes; published from 2002 until the present. The prolificacy of the series is important to note because this is something of a test of its viability for the publisher. What this affirms is that there are followers of TPGS because it provides

what they expect from the books; that is, to be aware of the frightful stories that the series claims to have concrete referents.

This series is a compilation of contributions through the correspondence of "authors" with the publishers. Most of the authors of the compilations are the contributors through the Internet, whose identity they may withhold. Although the question of the series' authenticity as "folklore" and not simply "written" by a writer may be debatable nevertheless, it is arguably an effective means of relaying this type of narrative. With the advent of a writing system and publication, recording this type of folklore has become possible. Since the book claims that people can contribute their own stories, readers of the series tend to think that what has been published is actually true. If the book is able to publish such an extensive collection of stories, one can say that it is meeting its purpose. Still stemming from the readers' thinking that the material conveys authentic narratives, it eventually becomes folkloric.

The TPGS series presents contributions that have been sent to its publisher by virtually anyone. This is an indicator of its folkloric nature since affirming the origin of the stories may or may not be done. What appears is what the contributor knows about the event and how he has written it. Two stories, *The phone call* (1) and *The Haunting at Conchita Cruz Drive* (2), have been extracted from the corpus and summarised to give an illustration:

> (1)   A girl's mother has just died. Then one day, her child's friend receives a call saying take care of my daughter. The friend recognizes the voice; it belongs to a dead person. (Ting 2004)

(2)   The story starts with a group of young people who are into racing cars and are in Conchita Cruz Drive. When they are about to speed off down the street, they saw a black car. What they see inside that car horrifies them; two people are covered with blood. They go straight to a house nearby to ask for help and then the house owner explains to them what they have actually seen. That place, Conchita Cruz Drive, has been a popular drag race spot over the past decades. One night, a black car ridden by a couple named Eric and Jenina was in the middle of a race and they had an accident there. (Maniego 2002)

What can be seen in (1) above is the ability of the spirit to do what she can when her corporeal counterpart is still alive – utilise technology, talk with people, and still take care of her child. Meanwhile, example (2) shows how people say that spirits manifest themselves whenever they want to warn others of danger. It is also noticeable that most of the characters the series has presented are the spirits, with different ways of manifesting themselves.

(3)   The spirit can have its presence felt; through knocking at doors or even just as a chilly wave of air.

(4)   Spirits can manifest themselves through media such as photographs or even computers. They are able to make themselves known to others (particularly humans who claim to have a "third eye") that they are there in that certain space.

(5)   The spirit can be physically present in the vicinity. Examples of this kind are the glowing red eyes that are seen peeking through holes and the lady dressed in white without a face.

Relating to the operationalisation of folklore, one may notice that there are attributes of 'authorship' for some example as in (1) and (2) but, these are false. This attribution stems from the information that is shared by the person as to how they heard it. In the entire series covered by the analysis here, there are recurring story lines with slight differences in characters and locations within the cities but the essential elements of the narrative are present. And this is how it is appropriate here that these, even if they are in a published medium, can be deemed as examples of Philippines folklore.

Emphasis has been given on the individual's alienation within his locality. To remedy this, the horror narratives then act as a way of binding the individualised person to the community. Horror narratives bring them together and let them share their own folklore. The former also contributes to the history of places where an unverifiable "truth" is contained. General descriptions of structures such as schools and dilapidated building that have been built on former cemeteries are just some examples of how the historical nature of certain spots within the locality of their being are explored and related to members of the community. Elements such as the characters of these narratives become frightening because the sense of familiarity toward them is shown. It is not

just the "unknown" that is frightening but what people do not know about the familiar things that create the sense of fear. Moreover, fear is successfully instilled among the listeners to the horror narrative because of the fact that the characters are "living with" the audience and that anytime, under any circumstance, these characters could attack them. As can be observed from the data collected, the coexistence with the human dwellers and the unpredictability of the attack of the horror narrative characters are what typically cause urban settlers to appease such beings.

Differentiated commonalities

The loss of the natural environment and the establishment of a man-made environment have created an impact on the characters presented in the narratives. Stories about the previous creatures are no longer told and they have been replaced with spirits. These spirits are those of humans who no longer have a kind of exclusive attachment to the natural environment such as trees; they already have manifested themselves as living in the distinct objects and spaces of the urban, such as telephones and the internet. This fact, in effect, has two implications. On the one hand, people in the urban area accept the said objects to be part of their "environment," as part of their worldview. They have been accommodated to fit the space that became void when the natural environment was taken out to make room for infrastructure and technology that are the components of urbanisation.

On the other hand, since there are no longer supernatural beings, the classification presented above is not applicable for the description of the characters of the narratives under discussion. What surfaces

is the need for a categorisation that will capture the portrayal of the "horrific" elements in the stories while perceiving them as being in a setting that has been urbanised. After such a process, many aspects of the rural community are altered if they are retained. Some, however, endure the transformation since they largely affect the population; an example of this is the horror narrative that frightens its listeners. In relation to this, some creatures of rural horror remain even though they have undergone some changes in their characteristics.

The *multo* 'ghost,' or the imprint of the *kaluluwa*, typically dominates horror in the urban society. Its manisfestation, or *pagpaparamdam*, never fails to cause fright to the witnesses within the story and to the latter's audience. However, the *multo* in urban horror has goals different from that of the rural narratives. Whereas the creatures of the latter cause harm to trespassers, the spirits of the urban narrative, typically, simply want to convey messages to humans, because of the belief that people who die but still have unfinished business on earth will wander as a ghost.

Pagpaparamdam is also a mechanism with which to take revenge on offenders. There are many horror stories in the urban setting wherein the ghost appears to have itself felt or even seen because something offensive or unlawful has been done by its human offender. Physical harm, which is what the rural creatures used to do, is no longer necessary. Too much fright can prompt an urban person to behave himself and act according to norms.

Perhaps, the common story of people who have been cursed because they have passed by creature-imposed "prohibited

zones" is more likely a residue of the rural horror narrative tradition. Creatures, such as the *kapre* and *dwende* still demand for respect for their private space, and if this is not shown, they will cause fright and/or harm.

Technological advancements that have been introduced into the urbanised community have, in effect, explained phenomena which were previously perceived as mysterious. An example of this is the creature *bangungot* that used to cause difficulty in sleeping (Ramos 1990). Medical studies such as that of Chua (2002), present the *bangungot* rather as an illness in which the symptoms are almost the same as told in the rural society. The characters of the horror narrative have thus been demystified.

In spite of the changes born of reappropriation and demystification, the characters of the narratives of the supernatural have nevertheless retained their raison d'être – social control. It remains that people should respect these spirits and should not trespass upon their territory. Or when such spirits want to communicate with the physical realm, the living person should make time to help or they might keep on making their presence felt and even harm members of the community. This is the aspect of the narrative of the supernatural that has remained even though the medium is now print or cyberspace; and in spite of the fact that the supernatural beings may have undergone transformations vis-a-vis the urbanisation of their locality.

Conclusion

Narratives of the supernatural respond to the remaking of the locality. The changes that the communities have undergone under the process of urbanisation have, in effect, transformed the setting and the characters and their respective raison d'être within the narratives.

The power relation between Filipinos and their perception of the physical world has been demonstrated and this may even be rooted in pre-colonial societies. Rural communities viewed spirits and beings as their equal and at times as of a higher stature because of the magnitude of their effect on the community and its members. In urban narratives, this sense of respect had endured even though the setting had been developed into a mostly man-made surrounding. Spirits still belong to particular spaces and there are instances of their entering, albeit violating, such territories. This is the form which the latent belief system among Filipinos has taken, one that forges their common identity.

Identity can point to its authenticity. Even if a culture undergoes massive changes physically or otherwise, there is a part of it that will remain unchanged. This will provide people with a bond that they know they have, even though they cannot expound on it. Change will occur. What has been demonstrated here is that narratives, being an element and a means of perpetuating culture, become transformed depending on their functional existence for the society.

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