

Orag and Dunong in Tigsik: Theorizing Paghurophurop

Douglas Angel A. Aragon II¹

¹ Central Bicol State University of Agriculture, Philippines.

Corresponding Author:

Douglas Angel A. Aragon II

Abstract: The tigsik, a traditional oral literary form, carries indigenous poetic elements that reflect communal values, storytelling, and ritualistic speech. It follows a performative poetics in which the paratigsik (poet) observes in every tigsikan (toasting, roasting, or jousting). Originated as exclusive for males (known Bikol poets) but has transcended to females and various tigsik enthusiasts (teachers, students, and the like) who welcome inclusivity in transmitting culture, identity, and collective memory. The negotiation between locations of culture is guided by Homi Bhabha's Third Space, which is grounded in the struggle for power, and Virgilio Almario's argument on nativist-structuralism, which liberates the indigenous philosophy of Bikol folks' orag (wit and creativity), dunong (wisdom), and paghurophurop (open rationality). These tigsiks posit the possibilities for subalterns to speak and be heard in an attempt to maintain indigenous practice despite their received Western consciousness and the influence of modernity, and to reconstruct the disavowed sensibilities, memory, and consciousness, thereby creating a negotiation between the indigenous and the modern Self/Other. This becomes the moment in which the demand for identification takes the form of a response to other questions of signification, currency, culture, and politics..

Keywords: Tigsik, orag (wit and creativity), dunong (wisdom), orality, poetics, conservatism, paghurophurop, open rationality.

Introduction

The ritual of tigsik is rooted in ancient traditions, when men are gathered for a celebration, a commemoration, or any event that was significant in their lives as a community. During a celebration, men are gathered in a circle to honor a wedding, the birth of a child, or a chieftain's elevation to power, and they drink wine made of fermented coconut water or nipa fruit extract called tuba. The drink is poured in cups made of wood or coconut shell and is passed around. One who holds the cup is obliged to recite a tigsik before drinking the wine. The tigsik may be sincere, humorous, or acerbic, but in all cases witty or satirical. Sometimes the tigsik is in response to, or in affirmation of, the tigsik recited by the previous drinker (Balde, 2024). "Over the years, tigsik has become a vehicle for airing commentaries and praise, and has gone beyond traditional celebrations, merry-making, and drinking sprees to tackle situations in all walks of life. Tigsik has been used in verbal jousts, with one tigsik recited as a rejoinder to a preceding one (Cabredo in Espinas, 1983, pp. 68-70; Realubit, 1983, pp. 98-99). Here, the skill at impromptu versification is truly tested. Meanwhile, noted tigsik masters (Bikol known poets) express their dismay to young aspiring poets who write and perform tigsik without considering its traditional form. Its literary qualities and characteristics have been called into question, whether the poets of the new generation still follow the standard and aesthetics of tigsik (Balde, note from conversation, February 2024; Banzuela et al., 2011; Chancoco, 2008). Thus, it is believed that when oral tradition dies,...

it follows the loss of memories of the past, its art form, poetics, and philosophy, in the end, the contemporary generation will suffer cultural alienation in the future of their indigenous cultural and literary tradition

Paghurop or perception of open rationality among the Bikol folks resonates with the Bikolanos' tigsik - banquet toast or folk speech, which makes sense for rationalizing realities through a toast, roast, or joust during the act of paghurop in the tigsikan. It engages with the philosophical and cultural question of how tigsik functions in diverse contexts, which is liberating for the marginal (regional) or the "imperialist notions of intelligibility, objectivity and subjectivity" (Garcia, 2004). As this attempt moves forward, this paper is foregrounded at the chances of liberating open rationality that has questioned the false notions of the universal, such as the assumptions about the universal features of language and value systems, articulating the ritual of orag (wit and creativity) and dunong (wisdom). These symptoms are interrogated from the nuances of tigsik's symptoms of orality, metaphor, poetics, and conservatism.

Literature Review

In the olden days, the Spanish missionaries in Bikol used poetry for conversion; then later, the native poets recited loas (poem or praise) for poetic romances of legendary-religious or chivalric-heroic origins (Realubit, 1996, p. 20). The Bikols sang the beauty of their land and told stories of experience and events in their lives. On record are the kangsin (tigsik) or abatayo as banquet toasts known for wit, brevity, and sparkle: improvised poems that related battles and wars in the town; and the exploits of new heroes, seismological and geological phenomena, massacres, strong tremors, explosions of volcanoes, or devastating typhoons (Castano, 1895, p. 37). Tigsik performed or written by these contemporaries resonates with an emerging poetry. Its literary qualities and characteristics have been called into question (Balde, 2024; Cirujales, 2024; Banzuela, et al., 2011; Chancoco, 2008).

Oral Literature in the Indigenous Societies

Walter Ong (1989) once wrote that oral verbalization is essentially the same as written verbalization because, for all intents and purposes, they are simply texts that provide meaning (p.10) but he also argued that oral art forms were essentially unskilled and not worth serious study (p.10). Mark Turin (2013) on the other hand noted that in many cases, oral and performative traditions are not translated when a community shifts to using a more dominant language, and that oral literature in general remains one of the most poorly studied and least recognized forms of human creative expression (p. 173). This may not only diminish the existence of the considered indigenous language or marginal texts, but may also lead to the death of indigenous literature and/or culture. Meanwhile, to varying degrees, many cultures and subcultures, even in a high-technology ambiance, preserve much of the mind-set of primary orality more than secondary orality, which proliferates and has consumed the comfort of digital technology (Crystal, 2000). Oral cultures produce verbal performances of high artistic and human worth, which are no longer even possible once writing has taken possession of the psyche [like of the Bikolnon's tigsik]. Saving tigsik (poem) as an oral form requires a commitment from every paratigsik (poet) to ensure that their mother language (the Bikol language in different variations) is present in all facets of transformation. Thus, teaching oral narratives and stories necessitates qualification, guidance, and creativity from the elders who need to bridge the past and the present because one of the significant elements of indigenous narratives is "... understanding of a worldview embedded in aboriginal oral traditions" (Archibald, 2008, p. 13). Additionally, a lack of cultural understanding of a particular indigenous worldview limits the process of uncovering the layers embedded within indigenous stories, and indigenous oral narratives may have many variations, metaphors, and symbols with implicit meanings and layers (Cruikshank, 1991). The Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest, for instance, the curriculum developers, indigenous elders, and educators are working together in creating educational programs that value orality (Archibald, 2008, p. 83). To Virgilio Almarino (1984), this is called indigenization, which he argues is another original form and not a copy of the foreign. Almarino contradicts the popular belief that the colonizer triumphs over the colonized; instead, it is the native culture that 'wins' in its struggle with the foreign. He noted the

possibility that certain elements between Western and Filipino cultures are actually universal and common to them. He posited that categories may be contextualized and committed to the native's sensibility, a profound commitment to bring literature back to the homeland (Garcia, 2004, p. 14-15). This implies that colonialism did not completely obliterate the native forms of consciousness because native consciousness has existed and emerged in postcolonial experiences. For instance, in Bikol literary practice, the *osipon* (stories), *rawitdawit* (poems), or *tigsik* (toast/ roast poems) in particular presents spontaneous orality, which often teaches emerging lessons about a given society's culture. The passing on of this orality from generation to generation keeps the social order intact. As such, oral histories are told and retold with certain relevance and with such sophistication and diversity in keeping the knowledge and preserve the historical record.

Bikol Oral Literature in the Digital Platform

Oral literature has embraced a wide range of digital media. Foley (2010) illustrated how oral tradition and internet technology share the core dynamic of navigating through networks. In the process, it fosters co-creative, participatory, contingent, and ever-emergent experiences. As such, many communities whose speech forms were previously oral have adopted the web as a virtual store for recordings of their endangered traditions and as a language-neutral platform for the transmission, communication, and revitalization of oral traditions (Turin, 2013, pp. 173-186); without writing, words as such have no visual presence, even when the objects they represent are visual. They have no focus and no trace (a visual metaphor, showing dependency on writing), not even a trajectory. They are occurrences and events (Ong, 1989, p. 31). Nevertheless, translation of sound or voicing to writing is empirical. The *tigsik* of Bikolanos now perpetuates in these transition and modality. The *tigsik* collection draws on the vast repertoire of indigenous oral literary tradition that created juxtaposition. This juxtaposition is obviously illustrated in the poet's preference for performance chants like those of the *tigsik*, rather than the written form, suggesting an emphasis on the rhythm and sound of the words, as well as their performance value and creativity (Balde, 2024; Banzuela et al., 2011). It is because the oral poet had an abundant repertoire of epithets, diversified enough to provide an epithet for any metrical exigency that might arise as he stitched his story together (Ogundipe, 2017; Ong, 1989, p. 21). Balde reiterated that *tigsik* can be best enjoyed when it is heard and viewed by the audience through on-stage performance. This is where the poet could place a fitting emotion for each delivery, and at the same time the audience could be able to connect with the meaning and emotion of every performed *tigsik* (Note from Conversation, 2024). Chancoco also posited that this performance showcases the poet's open mind in seeing how external sparks could at times be of help in energizing what is within. He added that the *talinghaga* (metaphor) is the core of the poem. It finds root in language as a product of a collective effort by a group of people to approximate meaning using verbal sounds imitated from the environment (2008, pp. vii-viii). For the poet, this entails a balance between internal meditation and external motivation. This is imperative because while the *rawitdawit* like *tigsik* is a cultural and ideological vehicle, it is also, primordially, a mode of pragmatic communication. The exciting thing about *tigsik* used in pragmatic communication is that it reveals structure at the level of language; for instance, the *talinghaga* (metaphor) of *tigsik* is complemented with *orag* (wit and creativity) and *dunong* (wisdom) to create texture that forms meaning and is inseparable. This shift of *tigsik* from an oral form to a digital format, such as podcasts and publications, conveys greater participation, creating new interactive *tigsik* and *tigsiikan*. Digital tools like audio recordings, social media, and digital archives make oral traditions accessible worldwide and readily available for future generations and researchers. Baquiran (2009) once noted that modernity offers technology that transforms the ethical and moral consciousness of the people; it influences Filipino poetics. The fusion of modernist and nativist perspectives is crucial in creating new aesthetics that the subaltern appropriates and/or abrogates using his/her language and poetics (p. 16). This is also the conservatism argued by Almario (1984) that the subaltern may stand alongside modernity by appropriating national consciousness (*pananaw sa daigdig*) and regaining nativist consciousness. This transformation can also be attributed to "the theory of transformative technology." Spelliscy (2000) explores orality as a social practice rather than a technology and relocates electronic orality outside any quasi-theological technological enhancement (Goody & Watt, Havelock, Ong, and others. On one hand, technology has positive

significance in the preservation of oral literature because technologizing speech through electronic media serves to rehabilitate orality into a sphere of reason. However, the magnitude of technologically produced acoustic ‘presence’ also ignites distant memories of the premodern sound of oral culture, and that writing is “to objectify speech, to provide language with a material correlative, a set of visible signs” (pp. 1-21). Moreover, Campomanes (2014) posited that in addressing the question of what makes these digital texts poetic, one is compelled to revisit established concepts of lyricism because poetry is an art for the ear, a musicality made to generate composition of beauty (p. 18); thus, technology offers correspondence between live extemporaneous performance and recorded orality to preserve the oral tradition, its acoustics, and conservative speech.

Bikol Oral Performance, Poetics and Rationality

Tigsik is commonly performed singly without accompaniment, in a linear, monovoiced narration, or with shifts to varying tones depending on the emotion the poet wishes to express in a poem, from a witty remark, riddle, exposition, or narration. Banzuela, et. al. recalled in his blog that tigsik embodies the distilled wisdom and expression of the ages. It reveals much of the Bikolano character, and because there is wit in every line, it goes to some sort of transcendent power in them as they sink in the mind to settle in the heart (2011, p. 7). The tigsik, thus takes pride in teaching the Bikolano audience the changing culture brought about by modernization, but it has still retained a sense of cultural conservatism or traditionalism, along with perhaps a perception of open rationality. Open rationality is the nuances of paghurophurop, the ability of the Bikolano to think and reason out with intellectual wit in a quick and brief period of time in tigsikan or tirigsikan. This is a cognitive intuition proposed by Maritain (1952), as “the intellectual perception of the inexhaustible and incomprehensible reality (Bersabe, 1998, pp. 29-31)”. The notion of paghurophurop is displayed during this performance through the poet’s continuous and extemporaneous exchange of tigsik verses. Moreover, within the verbal chanting, simultaneous meditation is associated with the expression “hulit dapit sa paghurophurop” (prayer in meditation), which has a deeper meaning than a simple expression of discernment (Tria, 2015). Serra and Banares, in *Mga Eherisyo Espiritwal* by Fr. Wilmer Joseph Tria, discussed that paghurophurop is likened to praying, a moment of discernment and contemplation. It is transcendently elevated through the invocation of the Divine, which unveils the theodical disposition that resonates within the hearts of Bikolanos - their deep and profound unity with the Divine that has significant Augustinian influence (2015, pp. 18-19). In an interview with Eillen Nidea, a Bikolana theater actor, similar notions to Chancoco (2008), Banzuela et al. (2003), Cirujales (2022), and Balde (2024) that the poet creates a mental outline of how he/she delivers the tigsik before an audience. His/her motivation includes his/her prevailing sentiments (pagtubod, pagmati) and collective consciousness (agimadmad), which is anchored in keen observation (maan) and actual experience (danas). Aida Cirujales (2008), in her tigsik collection, enumerates various functions of tigsik such as in the form of a blind item (borobentot), roast (patuyaw), toast (pag-omaw) or Bikol humor (pakunsuelo). Moreover, in a conversation with Balde (2024), he argues that tigsik follows a singular commonality in its delivery by beginning it with the remark, “tigsik” or “tinigsik ko.” The tigsik is either toast (pag-omaw) or roast (pagtuyaw), may follow end rhymes and aaaa, abab, or aabb schemes. Some follow the traditional eight-syllabic line, but some do so in various meters. Finally, tigsik like other literary forms, “moves the audience or reader’s feelings and imagination, giving and evoking visions above and beyond the plane of ordinary life and experience” (Garcia et al., 1993, p. 3).

Tigsik in a Postcolonial Context

The dominant nationalist versions of Filipino history, for example, remain mired in received and imperialist notions of intelligibility, especially in their conservation of the Western binaries of truth and falsity, objectivity and subjectivity. The historical narrativity determines the forms of reality; it is the monolithic myth of chronological causality and objective truth that needs to be most seriously interrogated and revised in our necessarily plural histories, and, as with all other forms of cultural representation, this can be done by hybridizing them, by introducing into them the heterogeneous forms of postcolonial representation (Garcia, 2004, pp. 8-9). Poetry such as tigsik also serves this

purpose of narrativity; it is in a creative, compressed, or concentrated poetic verse, resonating with its brevity and use of imagery. The meaning is left to the audience to fill the gaps in the storyline. The end rhymes, spontaneity, and the poet's quick contemplation serve as the conduit for memories recollected in the event of tigsikan (toasting, roasting, or jousting).

One of the commonly used figures of speech as a technical device is metaphor. It explores the rhetorical locus of stereotypes, hybridity, and multiplicity (Mack, 2006), is assumed as an imaginary identity rather than directly stated as a comparison (Baldick, 2001); on the other hand, Bhabha (1994) highlighted metonymy against metaphor because metonymy is a figure of contiguity that substitutes a part for a whole (an eye for an I) and must not be read as a form of simple substitution or equivalence. Both metaphor and metonymy are useful for understanding the ambiguity and hybridity of tigsik because the interpretation of metaphor and metonymy involves the interpretation of the knowledge set by the speaker or writer and the listener or reader, which involves the transference of lexical items from one code to another in a way that preserves, or equivalently approximates, the culturally significant set of connotations or significations. Metaphor and postcolonial might seem to be unrelated because the analysis of metaphor is wedded to universalist philosophy and formalist poetics (Ramanujan, 2000). The theory of metaphor has evolved significantly under the influence of linguistic and psychological findings (Black, 1962; Bowdle, 2005; Gentner, et. al., 2002; Gibbs and Tendahl, 2006; Glucksberg, 2003; Keysar, et. al., 2000; Lakoff, 1992; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Wilks, 1975), and the establishment of the fields of artificial intelligence (Barnden and Lee, 2002; Narayanan, 1997), cognitive science (Haskell, 2002) and neuroscience (Feldman, 2006). Following Aristotle's *Poetics*, it is widely acknowledged across these disciplines that metaphor is based on analogy (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002; Gentner, 1983; Grady, 1997; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Narayanan, 1997) and arises when one concept is viewed in terms of the properties of another. Metaphor often describes abstract concepts through reference to more concrete or physical experiences (Shutova, et. al., 2013). Moreover, translating metaphor appropriately to its context may cause difficulty in communication across cultures. Williams & Hiraga (1995) argued that the interpretation of metaphor depends not only on the speaker's linguistic knowledge of the invariant meaning of the encoded lexical item, but also on associated connotations, which have to do with 'knowledge of the world' and which may be culturally dependent (pp. 579-584). Influentially, I.A. Richards featured metaphor in the context of the general philosophical problem of language, "how words work" and "how thought goes on" (1965, p. 115). In his fundamental inquiry into "how words mean," metaphor emerges as the "omnipresent principle of language" (p. 92), and metaphor was no longer treated as just a technical device but as the mainspring of language's functioning (Franke, pp. 140-141). The poem then, like tigsik, expresses these norms of metaphor as rhetorical discourse with a polyvalent characteristic that resonates with its ambiguity, ambivalence, and hybridity, creating an open-ended construct in which one term may connote multiple meanings based on its context. These sets of tigsik hope to reveal these characteristics based on the paratigsik's linguistic knowledge and their "knowledge of the world," which may be culturally dependent. Thus, "the use of metaphors involves the capacity to acknowledge a community, and thereby to establish an intimacy between the teller and the hearer because metaphoric expression signals a bond between audience and performer" (Mack, 2006). This is what the tigsik offers: the interpretation of metaphor involves the intersection between the knowledge set by the poet and the audience or reader. "The said translation involves the transference of lexical items from one code to another in a way that preserves, or equivalently approximates, the culturally significant set of connotations" (Radwanska-Williams & Masako, 1995).

Virgilio Almarino argues that the poet and critic must look at our local poetry as constituting various forms of native reaction to the colonial project. He describes the outlines of a new Filipino Formalism or what he calls *Ang Bagong Pormalismong Filipino*, a method of reading and writing Filipino poems. This approach is supremely interested in illuminating the traditions in Philippine literature - traditions that can lead the critic to the discovery of a unique and sovereign Filipino Self. At the very least, this undertaking would result in a broadening of national memory as well as the propagation and strengthening of the national language (Garcia, 2004, pp.17-18). Almarino added, "The historical past and the present communicate with each other; this is a mutual communication between the formerly colonized and colonizer subjects, and the understanding of utopian desire to contemplate

in the transformation of Filipino consciousness or identity amidst the effects of colonization and indigenous culture" (Baquiran, 2009, p. 5). The indigenous folks did not start from emptiness; rather, there are significant points to ponder, change, re-create, consult, or eradicate. This is the liberating position faced by indigenous folks when confronted with history, tradition, and the past (p. 87). Filipinism depends on the strong belief that noted Filipinos' tradition and capacity to cross the boundaries of these limitations are within the currency of Self/Other negotiation (p. 103)". With these assumptions, Homi Bhabha's postcolonialism can transform our appreciation of how colonialism works. No longer can we assume that the native and the foreign are absolute distinctions, that power coerces and dominates absolutely, or that the result of the colonial encounter is a purely native or purely foreign thing. These literature reviews confront the theoretical assumptions indispensable for interrogating the postcolonial configurations and symptoms.

Theoretical Framework and Consideration

The study follows a grounded-ethnographic reading through the Constant Comparative Method of Data Analysis (CCMDA) developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Ethnographic Data Analysis by Wolcott (1994). Moreover, the qualitative data corpus articulates the postcolonial symptoms based on Homi Bhabha's (1994) Third Space, the notion of hybridity and ambivalence in emergent culture, in which Bhabha appropriates Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida's discourse as a site of struggle, and Jacques Lacan's notion of subjectivity. Meanwhile, Virgilio Almario's *Bagong Pormalismong Filipino* (2001) interrogates the colonized metamorphosis in the modern-emerging platforms of nativist culture and hybridized tradition from a national-structuralist perspective. Ong's (1982) orality and literacy delve into the psychodynamics of primary and secondary orality, while Bakhtin's (1963) dialogism and heteroglossia interpellate the oral performance of tigsik in various Bikol language variations.

The grounded-ethnographic and postcolonial-nativist approaches map out the tigsiks' postcolonial configurations, the symptoms of orality, metaphor, poetics, conservatism, and the nuances of paghurophurop, from the text itself, personal interviews, and Facebook Messenger conversations. This involves a metaphoric and metonymic reading that follows content and symptomatic reading, relating concept to concept, concept to nuances, then nuances to nuances and/or from emergence to emergence in establishing the perception of open rationality. This involves a continual back and forth inductive-deductive relationship between data collection and analysis. This process ensures that relevance is grounded in data, along with grounded theory and ethnography. Ethnography complements grounded research by interrogating the interviewers' responses in a systematic way, relating how a particular issue or problem would shape the conversation in which specific experiences of the participants. Ethnographic interviews, as a series of friendly conversations in which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants and interviews are co-constructed by the interviewer and interviewee in shaping the interviews in general (Spradley, 1979 pp. 58-59; 169-170); Heyl, 2001; Kvale, 1996; Bourdieu, 1996; Gubrium & Holstein, 1995; Mishler, 1986).

Walter Ong's Orality and Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogism

In his later publications, Ong (1989) distinguishes between two forms of orality: "primary orality" and "secondary orality". Primary orality refers to thought and expression un-touched by the culture of writing and print, while secondary orality is distinguished by the written and printed word, and includes oral culture made possible by technology (p. 10). In this study, the majority of the collection was collected on a virtual platform; as such, the ethnographic process aims to unearth the deeper reasons for literary discourse and poetics influenced by technology. As Jones (2005) puts it: Internet studies can [...] describe and intervene in the life and values of the people who use the internet, and these can be best understood through close observation and analysis of specific people and technologies, in specific places and times. In many ways, online ethnography is not very different from traditional ethnography (Hine, 2000; Jacobson, 2006). In fact, online ethnography has been described as "traditional adapted to the study of online communities" (Guimaraes, 2003; Kozinets, 2002). Along with this data collection, the study is also guided by Michael Bakhtin (1981) dialogic imagination. The

dialogic orientation refers to the degree of otherness of the word(s), which would create new and significant artistic potential in discourse. He mentioned that when “the living utterance having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue (pp. 275-276).” Hence, tigsik as a form of monolithic compositional structure (Bikol language) enters into rhetorical discourse and a signification of the abstract and concrete aspects of meaning because, “in the actual life of speech, every concrete act of understanding is active; it assimilates the word to be understood into its own conceptual system filled with specific objects and emotional expressions, and it is merged with the response, with a motivated agreement or disagreement (Bakhtin, p. 282).” This internal dialogization becomes a crucial force for creating form, where differences and contradictions are enriched by social heteroglossia, where dialogic reverberations dialogize the Bikol language itself, and articulate that every tigsik contains the principle of theme and content.

Homi Bhabha’s “Third Space”

Homi Bhabha (1994) introduced a postcolonial reading to interrogate the experiences of the colonized subject, framed in the West to delve into describing social criticism that bears witness to those unequal and uneven processes of representation by which the historical experience of the once-colonized Third World. And since Western theories use certain criteria that are incongruous with the complexities and cultural provenance of postcolonial writings and therefore cannot adequately evaluate or give legitimacy to these literatures produced out of colonization, postcolonial theory may address (Mongia, 1996, p. 1). Postcolonial culture is inevitably a hybridized phenomenon involving a dialectical relationship between the grafted European cultural systems and an indigenous culture, with its impulse to create or recreate an enriched cultural identity – the emergent culture. The emergent culture (a hybrid culture) is a disavowal of imperial culture. Bhabha identified this ethnocentric blind spot and voluntarist rhetoric as the possibility of translation and new ways of thinking about the dialectic between the general and the particular (Michell, 1995, pp. 80-84). Thus, this indigenous language could be a site of struggle or resistance, as it shows a discourse of truth. Following Foucault’s notion that discourse creates power, which enables resistance, it follows that the discourse of any text, like the Bikol’s tigsik, becomes a site of struggle. Hence, understanding the nuances of open rationality through paghurophurop traces back the realm of the beyond and an ongoing negotiation between sensibility and the ambivalent signification of the mainstream and the marginal. This ambivalent signification is what Bhabha calls “splitting”. Lacan’s fundamental contention regarding subjectivity, on the other hand, is that the human subject is split into the conscious and unconscious parts, and that the subjectivity of the analyst and the analysand work on each other in the same way that the subjectivity of authority and the subaltern conquers each other. Bhabha calls this dialectical playing of subjectivities the transference between the colonizer (mainstream) and the colonized (marginal). Lacanian psychoanalysis is applied in this paper in the way Bhabha used it to read postcolonial texts, by analyzing the subjectivities revealed in the texts through its content and form – metaphoric and metonymic images with which the colonized character identifies and summons the absent colonizer (1994, p. 36).

Moreover, Derrida and Foucault’s discourse as a site of struggle to consider the historical context of the texts in question assumes that the subjective identity given to us by imperial culture is constructed through historical, cultural, and social processes that can be negated as natural. This aligns with Derrida’s notion of the “center” which is not fixed; it could change over time. Bhabha appropriated this in his examination of the moment of enunciation and inscription of writing in post-colonial texts through the notions of difference and supplementarity. To Derrida, difference may either refer to “difference” (as derived from Saussure’s argument that people can tell words apart by their differences from each other) or “deferment” (from the French word “differer” meaning to “differ” and to “defer”). With this, Derrida argues that meaning can never be traced to a point of origin because meaning arises from a system of relations and differences, and words are defined by other words whose meanings, in turn, are determined by other words. Difference, on the one hand, may be conceived as an underlying principle of non-identity that makes signification possible only by ‘spacing out’ both signifiers and

concepts so that meaning appears merely as a 'trace' of other terms within or across any given term. Supplementarity, on the other hand, can be traced back to the opposition between nature and its others (art, culture, education, etc.). The word "supplement" can signal both the addition of something to an already complete entity and the making good of an insufficiency. To Bhabha, supplementary sense is the disembodied evil eye, the subaltern that wreaks its revenge by circulating, without being seen. It cuts across the boundaries of master and slave; it opens up a space in between the colonized and colonizer and asserts both the difference and the equality of the colonized culture to the colonizer's culture. Hence, the discourse of tigsik is grounded in the struggle for power - that is focused on the control of the metropolitan language and, recently, on the emergence of modern orality/language. Here, power is invested in language because it provides the terms in which truth itself is constituted.

Virgilio Almario's Nativist Structuralist Perspective

Filipino poetry and literary criticism, whether in Tagalog, English, or any local language, are inherently influenced by the country's postcolonial condition. Therefore, engaging with postcolonial theories is essential for an analysis of these works, as these theories provide valuable insights into understanding and potentially re-evaluating contemporary Filipino art and literary theories within this multifaceted context. However, it is important to note that postcolonial discourse mainly focuses on analyzing colonial and postcolonial contexts, which means it might not cover all aspects of literary interpretation. Its main utility lies in exploring cultural and interpretive debates between the colonized and colonizer consciousness. Virgilio Almario (2006) aspires for there to be a need to awaken nationalism among Filipinos, and at least to redeem themselves from Western's influence and subjectification. It is then the duty of the poet to find alternative readings and appreciation to assert his indigenous consciousness and nativist conservatism (traditionalist perspective) foregrounded by modernism (p. 6.) Moreover, Garcia (2004) posits that the distinct blend of cultural influences in the Philippines, including its colonial legacy and the evident fragmentation of its identity, is a critical aspect that must be considered in any contemporary Filipino study (p. 15). Anonuevo (2009) reiterates Bakhtin's assumption that the literary critic may question what is lost and gained when societies modernize. This is a dialectical debate that may establish the juxtaposition between traditionalism and modernism, such as the transformation of oral literary forms into its emergent transformation and creative shifts (Baquiran, 2009, p. 24). This is an inquiry of stylistics and philosophy that articulates the conflict between memory and progress, showing how oral forms have evolved over time and become a space where the old and the new coexist in tension, reflection, and transformation - a fusion of "I and Other."

Theorizing Open Rationality: The Orag and Dunong of Paghurophurop

Theorizing open rationality articulates paghurophurop, a cognitive intuition and theodical disposition (Maritain, 1952) that resonates with the tigsikan. Thus, open rationality is a cultural consciousness and expression based on the structured and fragmented poetic narratives of the paratigsik (poet) with his rawitdawit and/or tigsik, professing his orag (wit) and dunong (wisdom) in a cognitive-poetic dialogic negotiation. The notion of intuition covers many philosophical connotations. Philosophers of different epochs have their own understanding of intuition. Maritain once wrote, "the intellectual perception of the inexhaustible and incomprehensible reality thus manifested as the object of this perception". Intuition is a simple sight of the intellect that is above any rational analysis and demonstration. This perception resonates with the indigenous knowledge systems that local culture has its own rational frameworks rooted in experience, as Maritain considers "intuition as primary fact, the primordial experience of the mind in an immediate manner" (Bersabe, 1998, p. 29-31). Moreover, cognitive intuition is also associated with "intuitive metaphysics" and traces its origin back to St. Thomas Aquinas which implies the being or essence of other intuition and analogical value. When speaking of being or essence (intelligible idea or ultimate object of the intellect), it implies the intuition of its transcendental characters and analogical values. Thus, whenever there is a confrontation between the mind and its formal objects being (idea), intuition occurs (Bersabe, 1998, pp. 29-31). Serra and

Bañares in *Mga Ehersisyo Espiritwal* by Fr. Wilmer Joseph Tria (2015) argues on *hulit dapit sa paghurophurop*, a cognitive intuition is likened to a prayer when the poet pauses and discerns the topic. Serra and Bañares recalled that *paghurophurop* is transcendently elevated through the invocation of the Divine, which unveils the theodical disposition that resonates within the hearts of the Bikolanos - their deep and profound unity with the Divine that significant Augustinian influence. Tria noted that contemplation is guided by praise of the heart, prayed by the Christian to receive grace from God, which makes the soul live. St. Thomas Aquinas once stated that, in profound contemplation, the people recognize serving God (pp. 18-19). The [poet's] sense of awareness has been heightened, allowing him to perceive the world beyond its superficial layers. Through brief contemplation, such as in *tigsik*, the persona feels synchronicity and profound ideas from the universe. It seems that his third eye is open, enabling him to see realities because he can discern the configurations of metaphor and metonymy. He has that peculiar sensation of being logically rational to things and has a unique perspective on life. Thus, the *paratigsik* recognizes the divine essence, being, and belief in connectedness to the realities of life. Here, open rationality is the quality of being guided by spontaneous (fluid) reason, encompassing beliefs, actions, and decision-making processes. The *paratigsik* (Bikol poet), does not only tell the realities of life either in witty remarks, riddles, or in a direct statement, but also articulates a sensibility that is very much a Bikolano culture. Each *tigsik* is shaped by the *paratigsik*'s style and contradictions - ambivalence and hybridity, and abrogation and appropriation of language. Balde articulates: "We have been telling life through *tigsik* for a long time, some follow the tradition, some are just mere *rawitdawit*, but all of these are the Bikolano's consciousness that show power, subjugation and transformation" (Note from Conversation, 2024). The *tigsik* works with this concept of "Self and Other" because it theorizes the *paratigtik*'s practice and identity, an identification of "location of culture". The *paratigsik* does not only chant his *tigsik* in a spur of time for compliance, but meditates on how his *tigsik* would outsmart interpellation. This theorization leads to how the *paratigsik* appropriated the language. Ibana (2001) notes that language is the natural embodiment of human ideas; the Bikol languages have, in fact, a lot of Hispanic roots that have been enculturated and adapted [and abrogated] for our own purposes (p. 29). The *paratigsik* articulates through his *tigsik* that the Bikol language does not only approximate the need to express himself, but that what matters most is the multiple meanings embedded in the verse lines. The *tigsik* by the Bikolanos may serve as a conduit in foregrounding the once-colonized sensibility, literature, and poetics. The poem posits the possibilities for the subalterns to speak and be heard in an attempt to maintain indigenous practice despite their received Western consciousness and influence of modernity. Homi Bhabha and Virgilio Almario agree that appropriation and hybridization may reconstruct the disavowed sensibilities and reinvent the colonial memory and consciousness of the once-colonized subject. Almario added that the poet must have a keen observation and consideration of the Self rather than the Other, and he needs to face the struggle in his national consciousness (p. 34). He also argues that he is not entirely disclaiming Western influence, but that there is a need to position, in priority, indigenous characteristics when interrogating the Self and Other. Indigenous or national consciousness keeps alive the roots of the colonized subject (p. 50). In this act of recreation of the indigenous, Bhabha (1994) implies that cultural identity is an open-ended construct that invites the notion of plurality and/or negates Western universality. Cultural identity is fluid and is in a constant state of being created and recreated through the process of continuous negotiations, which takes place in what Bhabha calls "Third Space". Bhabha's Third Space and the notion of the beyond in a modern world may offer space for the "location of culture" that the formerly colonized subject sets a direction for themselves. In fact, the social media networks within the framework of modernization have created a strategic space for liberating the emerging cultural identity, poetics, and philosophy. Nevertheless, in the context of Filipino poetry (*panulaang Filipino*), "we must look at our local poetry as constituting various forms of native reaction to the colonial project." Almario recalls his *Ang Bagong Pormalismong Filipino*, a method of reading - and crucially, writing - Filipino poems, an approach interested in illuminating the traditions in Philippine literature - traditions that can lead the critic to the discovery of a unique and sovereign Filipino Self. "At the very least, would result in a broadening of the national memory, as well as the propagation and strengthening of the national language" (Garcia, 2004, pp. 17-18).

Methodology

This paper is primarily a qualitative descriptive paper that is interrogated from a grounded-ethnographic, postcolonial perspective through more than 100 selected tigsik. The selected tigsiks represent performative tigsik or the tigsiks that have been performed by various paratigsik (Bikol poets/tigsik masters), collected from cultural festivals, wedding receptions, drinking spree sessions, YouTube channels, publications, local mail, and Facebook pages. This investigation is inspired by Homi Bhabha's postcolonialism, which is grounded in the struggle for power, where that power is focused on the control of the metropolitan language, where power is invested in the language that provides the terms in which truth itself is constituted. The purpose of the struggle over truth is not to dominate, but to show how the text transforms the societies and institutions within which it functions, and to establish difference and absence as material signs of power, freedom, and creativity. This postcolonial perspective is supported by Virgilio Almario's nativist-structuralism, which advocates for an approach less influenced by Western frameworks. As such, this study also articulates the tigsik's metaphor from the Bikolanos' orag (wit) and dunong (wisdom) from Balde, Cirujales, Banzuela and Chancoco's perspectives. Moreover, Walter J. Ong's secondary orality examines oral culture, which is handed down through the words of mouth and then translated into print or digital clips. In this context, tigsik would encompass the traditional, unwritten practices of composing and performing these poems, highlighting the role of paratigsik in communal bonding, oral history, and cultural identity, which, at the end, emerges through electronic media, such as radio, television, and the internet. This form of orality mimics the participatory nature of primary orality, but operates within a context shaped by literacy. Correspondingly, Michael Bakhtin's heteroglossia explores the dynamic interplay of voices and social languages within tigsik. And George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's cognitive metaphor posits how tigsik poets conceptualize experience and reality through metaphors reflecting cultural values, worldviews, and social commentary.

Guided by a grounded-ethnographic postcolonial framework, this paper determines the various postcolonial constructs of orality, metaphor, poetics, and conservatism through in-depth text analysis, interviews, and performance observations. The tigsiks' collection was submitted to functional translation into English for universal understanding, particularly for non-Bikol language speakers. The translation was guided by Eugene Nida's principles of correspondence. In translating poetry in the target language, form is usually sacrificed for the sake of the content (Venuti, 2000). After the translation process, the selected texts were submitted to coding protocols and category labeling to generate the various postcolonial configurations and postcolonial constructs. The noted Bikol poets like Abdon Balde and Aida Cirujales, and Bikol literary poet/artists Jerome Hipolito, Elbert Baeta, Eillen Nidea, Rose Cid, Froy Berana, and Jerald Bermas, served as expert respondents, and the questions were semi-structured to provide an open and diverse conversation. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and some were conducted through Facebook Messenger.

This paper uses an a priori determination of the sample structure with a view to interrogate paghurophurop from the performative form of tigsik. The sampling decision is based on the inference of the perception of open rationality from the tigsik collection. The selected tigsik were clustered into themes and postcolonial configurations/symptoms. These tigsiks represent a relatively similar number of samples for each cluster to avoid dominance by a certain representation. The tigsik collection attempts to draw the inference of the relationships among modern orality, millennial metaphor, performance poetics, and structured conservatism in establishing the perception of open rationality from the so-called paghurophurop of the Bikolanos. The nuances of paghurophurop are demonstrated through the act of pagtigsik or tirigsikan (chanting of poems) by the tigsik masters, who are local poets themselves, and by some other groups of paratigsik (tigsik enthusiasts) such as teachers and students, who share the skill in performing tigsik. Moreover, the selected tigsik were in printed form, collected from publications, local mail issues, and digital platforms, and from the recorded performed tigsik, rendered or presented in public, such as in cultural presentations, poets' gatherings, classroom activities, and/or collected from YouTube channels.

Content reading establishes the tigsiks' postcolonial configurations, and then follows with symptomatic reading to articulate the postcolonial symptoms of modern orality, millennial metaphor, performance poetics, and structured conservatism. These postcolonial constructs are validated through personal interview(s) with the selected respondents. The respondents were composed of the local poets who are tigsik masters and tigsik enthusiasts, such as teachers, students, and the like. Before the interview, permission was sought from each interviewee-respondent for their consent and consideration. The interview is guided with a semi-structured questionnaire for a coherent and open conversation. However, in cases where saturation has not yet been attained, another set of interview(s) is administered. Moreover, performance poetics and the perception of open rationality have been cross-validated through observations of tigsik performances. Finally, textual discussions are provided with relevant literature(s) that would support the claim, and, as for additional ethical consideration, the respective tigsik authors and sources are indexed based on an appropriate citation referencing.

Results and Discussion

Here is a typical jousting between two tigsik masters during a suitor's visit called *pamamalaye* or *pamamanhikan* (a formal permission for marriage proposal). Take note:

Tag-lalaki:

Tinigsik ko si Maria,

Mabini na, magayon pa;

Burak бага sa lagwerta,

Lumay kami kan hamot nya! (Abdon M. Balde, National Artist for Literature)

(The suitor side:

Toast to Maria,

Demure and beautiful;

She's like a flower in a garden,

Whose fragrance trances us!)

The verse begins with the suitor's direct declaration: "Tinigsik ko si Maria" (Toast to Maria), which conveys a celebratory and respectful acknowledgment of the woman's beauty and character. The phrase "Mabini na, magayon pa" (Demure and beautiful), highlights two of the most desirable qualities in a traditional Bikolano maiden - gracefulness (*mabini*) and physical beauty (*magayon*). These attributes reflect how Bikolano women were often admired not just for their appearance but also for their composure and refined demeanor. The use of metaphor's *mabini* (demure) and *magayon* (beautiful) strengthens the suitor's admiration. Comparing Maria to a *burak* (flower) in a *lagwerta* (garden) symbolizes being delicate, beautiful, and pure. The image of a well-tended flower suggests that Maria is someone treasured and nurtured, much like a prized bloom in a beautiful garden. Moreover, the phrase "Lumay kami kan hamot nya!" (Whose fragrance trances us!), intensifies this admiration by employing the sense of smell as a poetic device. This metaphorical statement suggests that Maria's presence is not only visually appealing but also captivating in an indescribable way, leaving a lasting impression on those who encounter her. Thus, in the context of Bikolano's courtship, *tigsik* played a role similar to *harana* (serenade), serving as a powerful medium for expressing love and admiration. While *harana* relies on melody and song, *tigsik* utilizes poetic verses to articulate emotions. Only a few are skilled in composing *tigsik*, so non-poet Bikol folks sought the help of a skilled *paratigsik* (*tigsik* master/poet) to craft appropriately contextualized verses for them. This tradition highlights the value placed on literary artistry, as a well-crafted poem could significantly enhance a

suitor's appeal. Aside from serenades, tigsik was also used in the formal custom of pamamalaye or pamamanhikan (formal courtship), where a suitor formally asks for a woman's hand in marriage. In such gatherings, paratigsik acted as spokespersons for both the suitor and the maiden's family, engaging in a poetic joust. This verbal exchange, often witty and filled with metaphors, reflected not only the suitor's sincerity but also his readiness to honor tradition and prove his worth through eloquence. A well-crafted tigsik could determine the success of a marriage proposal, as it showcases not only the young man's feelings but also his ability to articulate social and cultural expectations. Tigsik embodies the rich oral tradition of the Bikolanos, reflecting their love for poetry, courtship, and the importance of wit in social interactions. It highlights the poetics of language, demonstrating that expressions of love are valued not only for its meaning but also for how beautifully they were conveyed. The practice of tigsik also underscores the community's appreciation for literary skill, as being able to craft and deliver poetry in a spontaneous and impromptu manner has been seen as a sign of intelligence and sincerity. Thus, as a form of impromptu verse, the poet (paratigsik) throws a crisp, witty, and poetic commentary on almost anything, vis-a-vis imparts knowledge and values (Minagayon Blog, 2023). This poetic performance is an act of discernment or paghurophurop, grounded in the struggle for an indigenous intellectual capacity to philosophize and rationalize with his indigenous language on a given issue or topic. Take note of the interpellation:

Tag-babayi:

Tinigsik ko an bisita

May ambisyon sa lagwerta

An buot na makua

Burak palan ni Maria!

(From the maiden's side:

Toast to the visitor,

His intent in entering our garden,

Alas! Is to pluck the flower of Maria!)

The maiden's response in this tigsik reflects the traditional role of women in Bikolano courtship, where subtlety and wit are used to acknowledge and sometimes challenge a suitor's intentions. Unlike the direct admiration expressed by the suitor in the earlier tigsik, this reply introduces a sense of being on guard, suggesting that while the suitor's presence is acknowledged, his intentions are carefully scrutinized. The opening line, "Tinigsik ko an bisita" (Toast to the visitor), mirrors the suitor's greeting but immediately shifts the focus to the visitor's purpose rather than his qualities. This choice of words subtly positions the maiden or her representative in a role of evaluation rather than mere admiration. The second line, "May ambisyon sa lagwerta" (His intent in entering our garden), introduces an element of caution, implying that the suitor is not merely an admirer but someone with a clear objective. In traditional Bikolano culture, women were expected to be reserved and discerning in matters of love, ensuring that a suitor's intentions were genuine before granting any form of affection. Moreover, this verse line is also a metaphorical statement that may connote a duality: it does not only posit the literal garden, but may also refer to the intention to become part of her family. The third and fourth lines, "An buot na makua, / Burak palan ni Maria!" (Alas! Is to pluck the flower of Maria!), reinforce this cautious intention. The flower symbolizes Maria's purity, dignity, or perhaps even her future, and the act of plucking suggests a permanent change. This response could either be seen as a playful challenge to the suitor or as a subtle warning that winning Maria's heart will not be easy. The use of alas! adds an emotional undertone, implying a sense of gain or loss over what the suitor truly seeks. In the broader context of tigsik and pamamalaye (formal marriage proposal visits), this exchange represents the verbal jousting between two paratigsik (poets) speaking on behalf of the families. The maiden's side, represented here, plays the role of initiating the test, ensuring that tradition, honor, and family values

are upheld before a suitor is given approval. This poetic duel adds an intellectual and artistic dimension to courtship, reinforcing the idea that love is not simply an emotional endeavor but also a social negotiation requiring wit (orag) and wisdom (dunong). Beyond its literary beauty, this tigsik reflects the value of a time when women are expected to be discerning and protective of their virtue. It highlights the importance of courtship as a formal process, where love is not given freely but earned through patience, persistence, and respect. The reply does not outright reject the suitor; instead, it presents a challenge: if he truly values Maria, he must prove himself worthy beyond mere words. In a poetic jousting like this, words could be easily and intentionally twisted to test the suitor's patience or even embarrass a spokesperson's ability to deliver a tigsik. The jousting continues until they come to the sensitive subject of the dowry. Consider this:

Tag-babayi:

Tinigsik ko ining dote

Si Maria mapupuwede

Kun may harong buda lote

An magurang kan babayi.

(The maiden's side:

I toast this dowry

Maria might agree,

If a house and lot could be provided

For the maiden's parents.)

While the earlier exchange of verses focused on admiration, intention, and the cautious evaluation of love, this response shifts to the practical and economic aspects of marriage. In traditional Bikolano culture, as in many Filipino customs, marriage is not solely a union of two individuals but also a negotiation between families, ensuring financial security and stability for the bride. The opening line, "Tinigsik ko ining dote" (I toast this dowry), immediately signals the transition from romantic discourse to a more transactional discussion. By acknowledging the dowry in a poetic manner, the maiden's side maintains the poetics of tigsik while firmly steering the conversation toward a topic that would test the suitor's readiness for marriage. The second line, "Si Maria mapupuwede" (Maria might agree), offers a conditional response, suggesting that Maria's willingness to marry is tied to her family's expectations, a common practice in arranged or negotiated marriages. The final two lines, "Kun may harong buda lote,/ An magurang kan babayi" (If a house and lot could be provided for the maiden's parents), explicitly lay out the primary requirement for the marriage to proceed. This request emphasizes the importance of financial stability, as providing a home and land for the maiden's parents signifies that the suitor is not only capable of supporting Maria but also respects and honors her family. In traditional Filipino society, it was common for a newlywed couple to either live with or provide for the bride's family, reinforcing the idea of extended family obligations. Beyond its literal meaning, this tigsik serves a deeper purpose in the poetic jousting. It acts as both a challenge and a test of the suitor's patience, as the maiden's side deliberately raises the stakes. If the suitor or his paratigsik struggles to respond, it could indicate a lack of preparedness, financial capability, or even eloquence - any of which could embarrass his standing. On the other hand, a clever and confident response would demonstrate not just material readiness but also quick thinking and poetic skill, both of which were highly valued in traditional courtship. The inclusion of dowry in tigsik underscores the multidimensional nature of marriage negotiations in the early Bikolano culture. While love and admiration were essential, they were not enough to secure a marriage. A suitor had to prove his ability to provide, his resilience in the face of challenges, and his respect for the maiden's family. The poetic jousting served as a sophisticated form of vetting, ensuring that the suitor was not only sincere but also prepared for the responsibilities of marriage. Finally, this tigsik reflects the strategic and poetic nature of pamamalaye (formal marriage negotiations). It balances wit with tradition, romance with realism,

and emotion with economic considerations. By turning a serious discussion into a poetic challenge, the maiden's side maintains both dignity and control, reinforcing the idea that Maria's love and her family's approval must be earned through persistence, intelligence, and financial readiness. Take note:

Tag-lalaki:

Tinigsik ko ining dote

Warang harong, warang lote;

Pagkamoot kan lalaki

Balaog daw dawa pobre.

(The reply of the suitor's spokesperson:

I toast the dowry,

We have no house and lot to give;

But the suitor's heart

Is pure though poor.)

This tigsik serves as the suitor's response to the maiden's side, directly addressing the issue of dowry with honesty and sincerity. It reflects a fundamental conflict in traditional courtship - love versus material wealth. By acknowledging his financial limitations while emphasizing the purity of his intentions, the suitor's spokesperson attempts to shift the conversation from economic requirements to the true essence of love and commitment. The opening line, "Tinigsik ko ining dote" (I toast the dowry), mirrors the structure of the previous tigsik, maintaining the poetic balance in the verbal jousting. However, instead of countering the maiden's request with an offer or negotiation, the next line delivers a stark reality: "Warang harong, warang lote" (We have no house and lot to give). This line presents a bold and straightforward admission, setting the stage for a deeper discussion about the suitor's worth beyond financial capacity. In a society where dowry was a common expectation, such a declaration could be seen as either an act of humility or a strategic appeal to emotion. The last two lines, "Pagkamoot kan lalaki, Balaog daw dawa pobre" (But the suitor's heart is pure though poor), attempt to shift the focus from material possessions to the sincerity of love. The phrase pagkamoot kan lalaki (the suitor's feeling) emphasizes his devotion, while balaog daw dawa pobre (pure though poor) highlights the idea that love should not be measured by wealth alone. This response draws on the common Filipino belief in pagmamahal na totoo (true love), which transcends material constraints.

In the context of tigsik and pamamalaye (formal marriage negotiations), this reply serves both as a defense and an emotional appeal. It tests the maiden's side, particularly her spokesperson, on whether they will insist on financial security or consider love as a more important foundation for marriage. If the maiden's family were to dismiss the suitor's proposal solely based on wealth, it could reflect a prioritization of material gain over emotional connection. On the other hand, if they acknowledge the suitor's sincerity, it could open the door for further discussion, perhaps leading to amicable compromises or alternative forms of support. This tigsik also serves a greater cultural function, reflecting a recurring theme in Filipino literature and oral traditions: the struggle of the humble yet pure-hearted lover. It resonates with the enduring notion that true love should not be bound by social or economic status. However, while this response is noble in its sentiment, it also leaves the suitor vulnerable. The maiden's side could challenge the practicality of marrying without financial stability, pushing the suitor's spokesperson to defend his position further. Finally, this tigsik captures the essence of poetic jousting in traditional courtship. It is not merely about winning an argument but also about proving one's worth through intellect, sincerity, and emotional depth. The suitor's response, though lacking in material wealth, is rich in meaning, reinforcing the belief that love, when genuine,

can withstand challenges even those as daunting as economic hardship. The role of the poet in poetic jousting during pamamalaye (formal marriage negotiations) extends beyond mere eloquence and creativity. A skilled spokesperson must also possess the ability to play through difficult situations, particularly when faced with the opposing party's demands. This involves not only crafting witty and poetic responses but also employing verbal dexterity to either redirect the conversation or strategically evade unfavorable commitments. One of the primary challenges a spokesperson encounters is the capricious demands made by the maiden's family, often in the form of exaggerated or impractical requirements. These demands serve multiple purposes. First, they test the suitor's level of preparedness - whether he has the means to support a future family and honor the expectations of the bride's kin. Second, they serve as a way for the maiden's side to gauge the spokesperson's wit and resourcefulness, a crucial skill in traditional Bikolano culture where verbal jousting was an esteemed art form. If the spokesperson falters, it may suggest that the suitor lacks the intelligence, patience, or resilience necessary for marriage. In this jousting, a seasoned paratigsik employs various rhetorical strategies to explore the conversation. One common technique is humorous deflection, where the spokesperson acknowledges the demand but twists it into an amusing or exaggerated response, making it difficult for the opposing party to insist on their request without seeming unreasonable. For example, if the maiden's side demands an entire farm as a dowry, the suitor's spokesperson might reply with a tigsik suggesting that love is more fertile than land and can cultivate a lifetime of happiness. This approach allows the suitor's side to maintain dignity without outright rejecting the demand.

Another method is strategic redirection of implied binaries, where the spokesperson shifts the focus from material wealth to qualities that are deemed more valuable, such as love, hard work, or devotion. This is seen in the suitor's response: "Pagkamoot kan lalaki,/ Balaog daw dawa pobre" (But the suitor's heart is pure though poor). By steering the conversation away from financial expectations and emphasizing sincerity, the spokesperson attempts to frame love as the ultimate dowry, subtly challenging the maiden's side to reconsider their priorities. At times, evasion and citing binaries are also necessary techniques. Instead of outright refusing a demand, a clever spokesperson might respond with poetic phrasing that neither confirms nor denies the ability to fulfill it. This allows room for future negotiation or an eventual compromise. For instance, if the maiden's side demands a grand wedding feast, the suitor's spokesperson might deliver a tigsik that praises simplicity and the joy of a humble gathering, subtly suggesting that love should not be overshadowed by extravagance. At the end, the spokesperson's skill in tigsik is not just about delivering well-crafted verses but also about maintaining control of the conversation. The ability to evade commitments that the suitor is ill-equipped to fulfill ensures that negotiations do not end unfavorably. Instead of allowing the maiden's family to demand impossible terms, the suitor's side uses tigsik as both a shield and a weapon - protecting their position while skillfully countering demands in a manner that is both respectful and persuasive. This presentation of binaries underscores the deeper function of tigsik in Bikolano courtship traditions. It is not merely a poetic exchange but also a test of intelligence, patience, and diplomacy. A suitor may not have wealth, but if his spokesperson can hold his ground with wit and eloquence, he at the same time demonstrates that he comes from a family that values wisdom and resilience - qualities just as important as material wealth in ensuring a stable and successful marriage. Over the years, tigsik becomes a vehicle for airing commentaries and has gone beyond traditional celebrations, merry-making, and drinking sprees to tackle situations in all walks of life.

Balde (2024), a Bikol laureate, mentioned that every time he attends a cultural festival or has been invited to deliver a tigsik, he always carries with him at least five familiar tigsik that he has already memorized; then he just plays around with these tigsik during his performance to appropriately match his tigsik to the context. He also ensures the definite count and rhythm of the tigsik. These elements aid him in becoming more fluid or spontaneous in his pag-tigsik. He posits that, before he delivers the tigsik, he discerns and ponders the subject or idea and quickly organizes it in his mind on how it will be delivered. With this plan in mind, Balde is able to appropriately demonstrate his artistic wits, sensibility, and cultural grounding. This is a form of indigenization which Almario (1984) reclaims as the native's sensibility and argues against mere adaptations of Western influence and against Bhabha's (1994) notion of abrogation and appropriation, allowing indigenous voices to reconstruct his/her own histories. Moreover, Mack (2006) asserts that metaphor in poetry serves as a rhetorical locus for cultural

memory, hybridity, and identity formation. Thus, tigsik functions as both a creative expression and a postcolonial assertion of indigenous presence and resilience. These tigsik suggest an effort to reclaim and retell stories that have been marginalized or altered by colonial narratives. The emphasis on the difficulty of this process reflects the challenges inherent in decolonizing history and knowledge, highlighting the need for profound ideas and narratives that resonate with the emerging experiences of the people. Nevertheless, Bhabha (1994) posits that an emergent culture is a hybrid opposition to, and adherence with, the dominant culture. He further articulates that the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, an on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The Bikolano's wisdom, as inscribed in these verses, acknowledges the ambivalent and dual nature of language, whether the tigsik toasts a celebration or roasts an issue, or jousts that requires poetic interpellation between poets. Tigsik, as a distinct poetic tradition, thrives on the interplay of wit, rhythm, and cultural insight. It is more than just a form of entertainment - it is a reflective art that encapsulates both the joys and ironies of life. Through clever wordplay and lyrical expression, it becomes a vessel for storytelling, critique, and celebration, embodying the Bikolnon's creative and philosophical spirit. Take note:

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

This tigsik conveys the nuanced art of storytelling, recognizing it as a craft that extends far beyond the mere construction of words into sentences. Storytelling, at its core, is an intricate process that demands a fusion of creativity, deep-seated ideas, and a profound understanding of human emotions and experiences. Consider this: "An pagsurat kaini, bakong madali sana/ Nangangaipo ini, nin hararom na ideya" (The process of writing is not an easy one./ It requires depths of thought). This reminds the paratigsik (poet) that, in the process of writing or of impromptu performance, it is not an easy task to create tigsik outright because it requires depth of thought or sound contemplation. This tigsik serves as an ode to the dedication and thoughtfulness of the poets who invest in their work, underscoring the challenges they face in crafting narratives or poetic situations that not only engage, but also resonate with their audience on an emotional and intellectual level. The emphasis on the depths of thought and creativity points to the necessity for the poet to draw from a rich reservoir of knowledge, imagination, and insight. This act is a process of discernment or meditation, which is a prerequisite to create a thought-provoking verse. Aida Cirujales once noted: "Pinaghuhurohuropan nin hararom ang sasabihun bago sambiton ang tigsik, minsan ini sarung tipsik kang isip, minsan hararom ang pinaghahalean (Notes from conversation, Graceland Naga February 2022)." (In creating tigsik, meditation and discernment; sometimes it is only a general insight, and sometimes it resonates from a deep-seated baggage). These tigsik (poems) acknowledge the meticulous and often painstaking effort that goes into the storytelling process, offering commentary and/or praise. It is a recognition of the persona's role, not just as a speaker but as a persona who molds and shapes the narrative with precision and care, ensuring that each element serves a purpose and contributes to the overall impact of the poetic situation. Take note of these lines from the poem: "Nangangaipo ini, nin hararom na ideya/ Tanganing mabinser an mga parabasa." (It requires depths of thought,/ To let readers believe the narratives unfold). These lines posit that tigsik requires depths of thought, so that the reader/audience feel the narratives unfold, and that the art of extemporaneous performance requires a poet's unique style and

sensibilities. Thus, in crafting rawitdawit, the poet employs his distinctive creativity, either by observing a rigid structure or by playing a freestyle (Cirujales, 2022; Balde, 2024); this suggests an assumption of creative plurality and an open-ended construct. However, in the midst of this neocolonialism and postmodernism influences, Ong (1989) reminds us that oral traditions operate within structured frameworks, where meaning is reinforced through repetition, formulaic expressions, and rhythmic patterns that aid memory and performance. Thus, oral forms [like tigsik,] follow intricate, often unspoken rules that shape its delivery and reception. Moreover, Chancoco (2008) emphasizes that tigsik's elements, such as the metaphor (talinghaga) and wit (orag) in rawitdawit are not arbitrary but integral to its poetic function, creating an equilibrium between structure and spontaneity. Hence, these elements may posit the nuances of open rationality known as paghurophurop embedded in tigsik and in paratigsik's (poet's) performance traces, back to the ongoing negotiation between the signification of mainstream and marginal sensibilities and ambivalence. This ambivalent signification is what Bhabha calls "splitting". Splitting is an intricate strategy of defense and differentiation in the colonial or postcolonial discourse. This process allows the native, or the subaltern, the strategy of attempting to inarticulate the voice of authority, the voice of the mainstream, at the point of splitting or ambivalence. Thus, the fashion in crafting tigsik that negates the use of languages other than Bikol maintains the indigenized identity of the formerly colonized subject, and the rise of alternative versions and structures promotes an emerging phenomenon. Here's another tigsik to consider:

Tigsik ko an tigsik na nakakaanggot,
Orog na kung ginagamit sa pagborobentot.
Kun may tinatamaan, makulog sa boot,
Maski bakong pigpunto
Biyong nagpopongot.
(I raise a toast to a tigsik with an infuriating downpour,
Especially when used to riddle, even provokes.
If one gets hit, it hurts the soul,
Unintentionally targeted or not, it takes an irksome toll.)

This poem poses a riddle, a blind item thrown at anyone and punches in anonymity either intentionally or otherwise. Take note of these lines: "Tigsik ko an tigsik na nakakaanggot/ Orog na kung ginagamit sa pagborobentot". (I raise a toast to a tigsik with an infuriating downpour/ Especially when used to riddle, even provokes). The "infuriating downpour that can hurt the soul," even unintentionally, illustrates the contentious nature of language, where the Bikol language and its impositions continue to influence and shape social and personal interactions. This tigsik underscores the ambivalent characteristics of language: as a tool for expression and vehicle for perpetuating power and conflicts. Take note: "Kun may tinatamaan, makulog sa boot,/ Maski bakong pigpunto /Biyong nagpopongot." (If one gets hit, it hurts the soul/ Unintentionally targeted or not, it takes an irksome toll.) The verse lines are straightforward, and it hits the audience unintentionally, where the audience's reactions define the meaning of the tigsik. The poem also highlights the metaphoric tendencies that engage with themes of identity, power, and resistance, albeit from different angles. The use of metaphor creates multiple meanings depending on how the audience/listener perceives the remark. Moreover, this tigsik serves as a meta-commentary on the power of tigsik itself, highlighting how this poetic form can be both a source of wit and wisdom, but also a tool for provocation and discomfort. Unlike tigsik that celebrates love, leadership, or community values, this verse reflects on the dual nature of poetry - its ability to entertain and critique, uplift and unsettle. It acknowledges that while tigsik is often enjoyed for its poetics, it can also carry sharp truths that may hurt those who recognize themselves in its words. The opening line, "Tigsik ko an tigsik na nakakaanggot" (I raise a toast to a tigsik with an infuriating downpour), immediately sets a confrontational yet playful tone.

And, the phrase *nakakaanggot* (infuriating) suggests that certain *tigsik*, especially those infused with satire and social critique, can cause frustration or irritation among those who hear them. The word *downpour* evokes the image of relentless criticism or a deluge of sharp words that cannot be ignored. This sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how *tigsik* affects its audience. The second line, "*Orog na kung ginagamit sa pagborobentot*" (Especially when used to riddle, even provokes), expands on this idea, emphasizing that *tigsik* can be deliberately used as a medium to stir controversy. The term *pagborobentot* (provocation) suggests that some *tigsik* are crafted not just to entertain but to give a riddle, challenge, confront, or even mock certain individuals or societal issues. In political and social discourse, this function of *tigsik* makes it a powerful form of expression, one that can hold people accountable while also amusing its audience. The third line, "*Kun may tinatamaan, makulog sa boot*" (If one gets hit, it hurts the soul), reveals the inevitable effect of sharp poetry: someone will always feel personally attacked. The phrase *makulog sa boot* (hurts the soul) conveys emotional impact, suggesting that *tigsik* can resonate deeply, sometimes striking at hidden insecurities or unspoken truths. This reflects how satire and social commentary often elicit strong reactions, as they force individuals to confront uncomfortable realities. Even when *tigsik* is crafted in general terms, those who see themselves reflected in its message may feel personally targeted. The final two lines, "*Maski bakong pigpunto, Biyong nagpopongot*" (Unintentionally targeted or not, it takes an irksome toll), highlight one of the most intriguing aspects of *tigsik*: its indirect yet powerful influence. Even when a verse is not meant for a specific person, those who relate to its message may still feel offended or exposed. This showcases the potency of poetic language - how it can provoke reactions beyond its intended audience. The phrase *nagpopongot* (irritated or angered) suggests that *tigsik* has the ability to spark emotions and even tension, further reinforcing its role as both an artistic and social tool. Thus, this *tigsik* acknowledges that words, though seemingly harmless, can carry immense weight. In the context of Filipino culture, where indirect expressions or metaphorical extensions are often preferred over straightforward statements, *tigsik* serves as a clever way to voice criticisms without engaging in direct conflict. Franke (2000) interpellates that all language is metaphorical and paradoxical, which is intelligible in contrast to literal language. Moreover, I.A. Richards describes it as "how words work" and "how thought goes on" (1965, p. 115). He noted that metaphor emerges as the "omnipresent principle of language" (p. 92) and metaphor may no longer be treated as just a technical device but as the mainspring of language's functioning. The poem then, like *tigsik* expresses a view of metaphor as rhetorical artifice that splits apart its centers and claiming innermost reality. Thus, *tigsik* as a platform for language plays a crucial role, acting as both a medium of expression and a repository of cultural identity. Here, the style of toast, roast, or joust communicates complex themes and issues, making *tigsik* a conduit for meditation and discernment, particularly when the verses confront criticism rather than recognition.

The ritual of *tigsik* (banquet toast) is rooted in ancient traditions, when men are gathered for a celebration, a commemoration, or any event that was significant in their lives as a community. During a celebration, the drink is poured in cups made of wood or coconut shell and is passed around. One who holds the cup is obliged to recite a *tigsik* before drinking the wine. The *tigsik* may be sincere, humorous, or acerbic, but in all cases witty or satirical. Sometimes the *tigsik* is in answer to, or in affirmation of, the *tigsik* recited by the previous drinker (Balde, Rikorida Bikolandia, March 2020). Nowadays, *paratigsik* (poet) does not anymore raises a glass of *tuba* or *gin* to start a toast; rather, the *paratigsik* directly commences the *tigsikan* in the absence of the glass of *tuba* or *gin* and starts the verse with the remark, *tigsik ko* (Balde, Note from conversation, Cagsawa Festival 2024). This is now the common practice when *tigsikan* is done during cultural programs, culminating activities, or gatherings of local poets. Remarkably, the passing of time, modernity, and Western influence have provided a dramatic shift in the way *tigsikan* is conducted. *Tigsik* has evolved, and *tigsikan* experienced the shift away from its tradition, exemplifying the broader impact of adaptation and transformation that occurs when traditional customs intersect with contemporary societal norms and global cultural phenomena. This *tigsik* collection represented a relatively similar number of samples for *tigsiks* from publication and *tigsiks* from the digital platform. All of these were performed, rendered, or presented in public, such as in cultural presentations, poets' gatherings, and classroom activities. The sampling decision was based on the inference of *tigsiks* developed by *tigsik* masters (known Bikol poets) and *tigsik* enthusiasts (teachers, students, and the like) that resonate on *paghurophurop* - the perception of open

rationality. This tigsik collection interrogates the relationships of postcolonial configurations and postcolonial symptoms of modern orality, millennial metaphor, performance poetics, and structured conservatism. The themes in the selected tigsiks texts are so closely interwoven because each text posits parallel postcolonial configurations, from linguistic reclamation and observance to traditional literary forms, cultural references, modern poetics and social commentary, hybrid literary style, interplay between form and content, critique of government and social inequities, humanization of political critique, complex relationship with authority, cultural hybridization, resilience, and collective action. Each tigsik articulates the ambivalent nature of Bikol persona, which are not pulled apart but “singing new songs,” a new creation from/within the border. The poems utilize the Bikol language to assert indigenous linguistic identity against national and global homogenizing forces. By writing in Bikol, the poets emphasize the importance of preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages, reinforcing the cultural identity of the Bikolnons and reflecting a commitment to cultural diversity and local identity preservation. These tigsiks (poems) use satirical or humorous commentary to connect contemporary issues with cultural heritage and reinforce communal bonds through shared cultural practices.

In summary, this tigsik collection conveys postcolonial configurations that reclaims and asserts indigenous linguistic identity by utilizing the Bikol language, subverts the dominance of mainstream language, and emphasizes the importance of indigenous linguistic heritage. The selected poems highlight contemporary realities by incorporating local cultural references, including social dynamics, educational challenges, political activity, socio-economic struggles, environmental stewardship, and personal experiences. It addresses contemporary socio-political issues, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, corruption, social inequality, remote learning, and environmental conservation, to emphasize the importance of discipline, perseverance, and respect in education and society. These tigsiks critique government aid distribution, social disparities, the educational system’s pandemic response, and societal attitudes, highlighting the impacts of systemic inequities on marginalized communities and calling for greater accountability and social justice. On a positive note, the poems acknowledge the positive impacts of aid and support while calling for greater accountability, recognition, and responsiveness from leaders. Meanwhile, these poems (tigsiks) undergo transformations from performative to print media, from traditional banquets to cultural festivals and poet gatherings. The tigsiks are no longer confined to male stereotypes but to all genders, and not only performed by the tigsik masters (poets) but also open to all tigsik enthusiasts (teachers, students, and the like). The poems blend traditional tigsik form with modern poetics, utilizing humor, critique, celebration, and social commentary to merge traditional and contemporary influences and create a hybrid literary style - nuances of modern orality. The so-called millennial metaphor, an emerging contradiction and resistance, transforms tigsik into a nuanced medium, embedding profound ambivalence and hybridity that, while ostensibly focusing on everyday life, rural landscapes, or personal emotions, discreetly conveys a collective moral grief and critique of the injustices, deprivations, and harsh realities under colonial rule. Moreover, the exchange of interpellation between paratigsiks (poets) is a rationality of the poet to interpellate his/her orag (wit) and dunong (wisdom). This is the creativity and cognitive intuition of the paratigsik to make the argument under his control and to his/her advantage. Both paratigsik enter into a social contract or silent agreement in which he/she when it is not yet his/her turn to recite a tigsik, agrees to be passive in his/her behavior but open, eager, and active in decoding the signs presented to him/her before he/she responds. Thus, the tigsik as a postcolonial text conveys structured conservatism - a nativist essentialism (Almario, 2006), that infers and inherently possesses both structure: the rhyme and rhythm (Balde, 2024) but is also open to a flexible format.

Conclusion

The tigsik, as a product of culture, needs interrogation with postcolonialism to highlight cultural identity amid the midst of the various hybridities at play in contemporary literature. The themes in tigsik are closely interwoven because each tigsik posits parallel postcolonial symptoms and constructs from modern orality, millennial metaphor, performance poetics to structured conservatism. Each tigsik articulates the hybrid nature of paratigsik (poet) and the tigsikan, which at the same time recreating the old into an emerging form.

The Indigenous and Modern Self: Postcolonial Configurations of Performative and Print Form Tigsik

The tigsik collection from the performance and print forms has attempted to liberate the Bikol persona (paratigsik) from the subjectivity addressed to stereotypes and the emerging tigsik's transformation, and its instances of configurations vis-a-vis, have maintained its ingenuity and modern poetics, such as: linguistic reclamation, traditional literary forms, cultural references, modern poetics and social commentary, hybrid literary style, dynamic interplay between form and content, critique of government and social inequities, humanization of political critique, complex relationship with authority, cultural hybridization, and resilience and collective action. These configurations demonstrated the superiority of the Bikol persona in his/her negotiation against neocolonial challenges through his/her vernacular language, structured form, and the rationality of orag (wit) and dunong (wisdom) - an indigenous poetics that prevails over the influence of technology and modernism. Moreover, the concurrent presence of the tigsik's transformation and resistance to various new constructs, such as the proliferation of various measures (line verse), the absence of wine in commencing the tigsikan and the implicit jousting, resonates with modern poetics that creates a fusion of unique ambivalence and appropriation, or what paratigsik (poets) calls a "negotiation between cultures" - a dialectical assimilation between subjectivity, identification, and modernism. Each configuration encapsulates a different aspect of postcolonial literature, demonstrating how these poems address contemporary issues while preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage. The metaphoric-metonymic descriptions and postcolonial symptoms posit how the poems use the Bikolano language and appropriate a few Filipino and English languages in asserting identity, adaptability, educational and societal values, social justice, and collective action. These texts posit that cultural consciousness and rationality are evolving and exist in a state of tension or contradiction, such as the emerging transformation of orality, metaphor, poetics, and conservatism. Thus, by writing in Bikol language, the paratigsiks have maintained the indigenous linguistic heritage and language. This is an act of linguistic reclamation that reinforces the cultural identity of the Bikolano people, reflecting a broader commitment to cultural diversity and the preservation of local identity. The tigsik traditionally used for satirical or humorous commentary is utilized to engage with contemporary concerns, thereby reinforcing communal bonds through shared cultural practices, which incorporates cultural references within the poems. This tigsik collection creates a tapestry that resonates with contemporary audiences by emphasizing references to social dynamics, educational challenges, political activity, socio-economic struggles, and environmental stewardship. The inclusion of historical perspectives and collective family efforts further emphasizes the communal and performative nature of indigenous poetics, showcasing tigsik's relevance in addressing present-day issues. With these transformations and realities, tigsik remains a convivial expression, voiced as a drinking salutation, and a mirror of folk oral traditions and practices between the conservative and modernist Bikolanos. Thus, tigsik as performance poetry expresses various shades of cultural experiences, which reveals various forms of transformation. These transformations exist in cultures that appear to be quite similar in all countries with a colonial history. In one sense, any literary form is cross-culturally interrelated because it negotiates a gap between worlds, a gap in which the simultaneous processes of abrogation and appropriation continually strive to define and determine one's practice. "This particular literary form is therefore always presented in the tension between the abrogation of mainstream language, which speaks from the Center, and the act of appropriation that brings it under the influence of the vernacular tongue. The complex of speech habits that characterizes the local language establishes its link in the currency of time. Thus, "without the process of appropriation, the moment of abrogation may not extend beyond the reversal of the assumptions of privilege, the "normal", and a correct inscription, all of which can be simply taken over and maintained by the new usage" (Bhabha, 1994).

The Postcolonial Constructs: Modern Orality, Millennial Metaphor, Performance Poetics, and Structured Conservatism

Modern orality is the transformation of tigsik's oral tradition in the age of digital technology, media, and social change. The proliferation of digital gadgets transforms the media to shift and blend traditional consciousness with modern practice reflected in themes of social issues, digital life, and identity. This becomes the conduit between the traditional spoken word and contemporary expression, which allows the tigsik to survive and evolve through time, while significantly preserving the tigsik's oral tradition and poetics. The tigsik and tigsikan still observe live performances in local poet gatherings, school culminating activities, and cultural festivals, serving its function to give praise, throw commentary, or pose a riddle. Moreover, the tigsik still uses the Bikol language in different variations, but some tigsiks are structured in Bikol mixed with Filipino or English, which is inevitable. Modern orality, in this sense, is the transformation of the tigsik's spoken tradition into a living, evolving voice of culture - blending the old poetics with the contemporary ones, but still being spoken, felt, and indigenous. On the other hand, the millennial metaphor in this study recognizes tigsik as a traditional Bikol poetic form, as a literary device, and the millennial mindset as a modern cultural lens through paghurophurop. Millennial metaphor is a modern symbolic expression that reflects the attitudes, experiences, and language of the contemporary generation. This generation marries tradition and technology through the use of digital and pop culture references to express their identity, freedom, and social awareness, as reflected in the discussion of the postcolonial configurations of tigsik. In this transformation, in which tigsik and tigsikan convey the new symbolic language that connects tradition and modernism, uncover Bhabha's (1994) notion of ambivalence and hybridity because the various forms of social, educational, political, and cultural negotiation posit an ambivalent culture that both opposes and, at the same time, supports the dominance of neo-colonialism and patriarchy, treading on the boundary between domination and resistance. This cultural identity alters both stereotypes (the colonizer and colonized), dominant over marginalized culture because of the effects of emergence. This is what tigsik has demonstrated in negotiating in the nativist and postcolonial border. The negotiation is mediated through the use of Bikol language that paratigsik himself/herself has articulated in his/her negotiation with his/her tigsik toast or roast. This is also seen through the process of "refusal, rejection, and radical questioning of the categories of imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or correct usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning inscribed in words" (Bhabha, 1994), and "[encourage the Filipino people to help in reclaiming the lost national consciousness from Western influence and modernism so that the colonized subject will not be alienated from his/her Self and nation and must be aware, like a literary critic, consciously aware of the various developments of modernism"] (Almario, 2006). This rejection of the power of the imperial center incorporates the colonial elements with the existing nativist-postcolonial culture in order to come to terms with the neocolonial reality. Nevertheless, the paratigsik has maintained his/her indigenous language, but has also appropriated and reconstructed the tigsik in a national language (Filipino) into new usages as an expression of a renewed sense of Bikolano sensibility. The selected tigsiks convey transformation and shift - transformation from performative to print, drinking sprees to cultural festivals, and poet gatherings becoming inclusive.

At its core, reflects Bikol values, such as family and community, gratitude and respect, and moral order (paghurophurop). Because of this, the tigsik has carried a conservative spirit by maintaining traditional morals and social harmony. The structured conservatism in this study is still dominant in the collected tigsik because of its tigsik's form, tone, and moral message, which reflect back on its traditional form - the rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and the customary opening line, "tigsik ko." Another significant note to consider is the presence of cultural structure that the tigsik observes in ceremonial discourse of orag and dunong. The celebratory and didacticism of every tigsik keeps the tigsik culturally rooted and preserves the Bikolano's cultural tradition and poetics. The tigsik is poetic in essence, not just in language, but in how it is demonstrated through performance. This is the performance poetics present in each tigsik and tigsikan. It is a form of reasoning, or open rationality, that showcases the paratigsik's reasons through feeling, rhythm, and delight. Despite the emergence of modern themes and influences, the tigsik continues to uphold a structured framework of rhythm, rhyme, and a ceremonial tone that reinforces respect, faith, humility, and communal harmony. Even when performed in contemporary contexts, the tigsik remains a moral aesthetic expression of Bikol identity and sensibility. This is what Bhabha's notion of cultural negotiation conveys: "cultural practices and identities are not fixed but rather emerge from and are shaped by the spaces between cultures,

creating a hybrid and fluid reality" (1994). Moreover, these poems emphasize communal cooperation and support, highlighting the resilience of individuals and communities in the face of technological challenges, environmental issues, socio-economic struggles, and the impacts of the health-scare pandemic, underscoring the importance of collective action in achieving personal and communal progress. The poems articulate contemporary issues with cultural heritage by employing the traditional and emerging form of tigsik. In a performative discourse, the interpellation between paratigsik is the rationality of the poet, presenting his/her orag (wit) and dunong (wisdom). This is the creativity and cognitive ability to control the interpellation to his advantage. Both paratigsik enter into a social contract or silent agreement in which he/she when it is not yet his/her turn to recite a tigsik agrees to be passive in his/her behavior but open, eager, and active in decoding the signs presented to him/her before he/she responds.

As a postcolonial text and, at the same time, an indigenous form of poetry, it is reasonable to infer that tigsik inherently possesses both structure: rhyme and rhythm. Balde (2024) posited that among the various traditional poetic forms in the regions, the dalit emerged as the most favored, due to its less stringent structure compared with the compactness of tanaga and diona. Its flexible format is well-suited to the expansive expressions characteristic of tigsik. The poems reclaim and assert indigenous linguistic identity by utilizing the Bikol language, countering the dominance of national and colonial languages and emphasizing the importance of preserving and revitalizing indigenous linguistic heritage, thus demonstrating a hybridization of indigenous and modern poetic forms through their structure and diction. Taking into consideration tigsik's purpose, its creation is imbued with ritualistic significance, echoing the oral tradition's and cultural consciousness, which reflects the collective values and beliefs of a community, embedding the poem within a broader tapestry of communal identity and tradition. Renowned poet and critic Michael Corroza delineates three indispensable elements in the art of poetry: a deep-seated awareness of poetic tradition, encompassing the historical and critical insights from past poets and critics; an openness to diverse influences, enriching the poet's expressive palette; and a boldness to innovate, challenging conventional norms to forge new paths in poetic expression. These principles underscore the intricate balance between honoring tradition and embracing change, which is central to the dynamic evolution of poetic artistry. In one of the lectures of Ophelia Dimalanta, she mentioned the anatomy of a poem, "seeing the poem on the page (emphasis on the lines); hearing the music of the poem (capitalize on musicality, never mind the meaning); enjoying the images (visual experience or poetic intention - what is materialized in the text, theme); enjoying the emotional experience; and zero-in on what you would like to say" (2010). Moreover, since tigsik are for the most part miniatures, verses must first of all pass the poet's test of fitting the abstract into something common, a feat which takes years to master. It is not enough, therefore, that one has the penchant for banter and repartee. "He must, more than anything else, have the finesse of language and perception to get another heart and soul" (Banzuela, 2011, p.8). Hence, in general, tigsik uses the Bikol language of the common folks to express the sensibilities of the common folks. This is the tigsik of Bikol: a rite of wit and wine, but more so a circle of togetherness; a primal song, though is not ancient, a poet's hour, though the people's day (Banzuela, 2011, p. 37).

The themes in tigsik are closely interwoven because each tigsik posits parallel nativist-postcolonial symptoms and constructs from modern orality, millennial metaphor, performance poetics, and conservative structuralism. Each tigsik articulates the hybrid nature of paratigsik (poet) and the tigsikan, which at the same time recreating the old into an emerging form. Thus, considering Bhabha's notion of ambivalence, hybridity, and appropriation, the paratigsik meditates on the philosophy of orag and dunong to understand the Self and Other binaries, while evacuating the Self as the site of meditation and autonomy vis-a-vis is creating a mark of modernity that, at the same time, maintains the fusion of Self and Other. Moreover, the attempt to appropriate Filipino in tigsik abrogates the vernacular Bikol language, thereby promoting a hybrid and dynamic verse. However, this attempt is still limited by the proliferation of tigsik in Bikol. Nevertheless, the function and relevance of tigsik is relevantly significant to the Bikolanos' literary landscape, whether performed or written. The tigsik in vernacular paves the way to transformation. It seems to be preoccupied with different realities, such as the loss of Filipino noted values, modernist over conservative familial ties, hybrid education, multicultural language, health scares, political dynasties, divergent economy, and the like are just some

of the few postcolonial configurations that emerged from these millennial texts. These configurations define the emerging modern orality and performance poetics. They marry modern poetics, using humor, critique, celebration, and social commentary to merge traditional and contemporary influences and create a hybrid literary style. The common quatrain tigsik's structure evolves into various line-verses, including tercets, couplets, and a few experiment to more than a quatrain form. Thus, tigsik does not only conforms to a one-stanza four-line verse poem, but it may be composed of several tigsiks within one tigsik. Moreover, Bikol language in different variations, remains the mainstream language for tigsik, although some written or performed in Filipino language.

Paghurophurop: Perception of Open Rationality

Open rationality examines how the tigsikan and paratigsik contemplate and rationalize his tigsik before a performance. In his contemplation, the tigsik must express inclusivity, communal norms, and indigenous expression that posits the paratigsik's theodical disposition and reasoning, while keeping him open to emotion, dialogue, and lived experience. He contemplates the picture of various aspects, such as what technique he will use for his dialogue with the audience. In the act of paratigsik's contemplation, the audience are tempted to turn away from the examination of the tigsik's mark of local color - Bikol language and the paratigsiks as a representation of postcolonial literature. With the use of tigsik's modern orality, millennial metaphor, performance poetics, and structured conservatism, it fulfilled the needs of the meaning of the text to which the indigenous language has subverted the criteria used by the dominant culture in understanding the colonized/subaltern literature. The indigenous language becomes a site of struggle because it destroys the monopoly of the colonizer's language (English) or the mainstream language (Filipino) in presenting meaning. The Bikol language has been able to perpetuate the paratigsik's indigenous sensibilities and consciousness by asserting that regional literature written in various vernacular languages has successfully questioned the claim of English to assume the dominant status of a standard code – the language of the erstwhile center and the claim of the Filipino as the mainstream language of the colonized. With this, the colonizer's culture emerges in the colonized subject's identity and culture, as the hybrid characteristics of the colonized subject reveal the various transformations of the subject. Thus, open rationality values dialogue, empathy, and lived experience as sources of truth. Through performance, rhythm, and imagery, the tigsik expresses moral reflection and social insight that arise from everyday life. The tigsikan allows both paratigsik and the audience to participate in meaning-making, turning poetry into a shared act of reasoning that affirms human values such as faith, resilience, and community.

The paratigsik in this collection presented an effective identifying relationship between self and place, identity and culture, and linguistics and language. Through these selected tigsiks, this paper has attempted to prove that there is a Bikolano consciousness that exists beyond the stereotypes created from the fusion of the nativist and Third Space's hybrid and ambivalent identity and culture. This is an identity that cannot be neatly defined, but the border that created the emergent hybrid culture and identity transcends this definition. The paratigsik (indigenous Self) is a common persona, but may also be an intelligent folk with a cognitive intuition and rational mind that "fair skin" persona claims. Bikolanos do not only do the honest jobs of housekeeping, farming, and fishing; they are also poets, writers, entrepreneurs, political leaders, and the like which are also evident among the so-called superior stereotypes. This is a rationality that is continually being rediscovered by the indigenous folks themselves, who have assimilated mentally even during and after the propagation of the colonizers' superiority. The phenomenon of paghurophurop or the perception of open rationality, is attributed to the dialectical assimilation and resistance embedded in tigsik (banquet toast) and tigsikan (oral performance). The tigsik which is known to Bikolanos posits diverse discourses either to deliver a direct criticism, throw a blind item, or simply praise a meritorious action. This act of intellectual discernment or cognitive intuition during the tigsikan (poetic conversation) contemplates Maritain's (1952) cognitive intuition and analogy of being or essence. It articulates how the Bikol folk responds rationally and readies himself for interpellation in a limited time. In the oral performance of tigsik, the paratigsik or the so-called tigsik masters and/or tigsik enthusiasts, carefully craft the tigsik as toast, roast, or joust. This process involves a deliberate pause (discernment of being) to reflect on the meaning and intention behind each stanza, ensuring that the message must be conveyed appropriately. The other paratigsik, in turn, or the audience, listens attentively, reflecting on the verses and its deeper implications, and

how it will be rebutted instantaneously. This dynamic interplay between tigsik performers exemplifies open rationality, as it involves deep reflection, cognitive intuition, and thoughtful engagement. Through this literary engagement, open rationality is demonstrated as a conduit of communication between paratigsik(s) and audience/reader.

The perception of open rationality is an open-ended construct, imperfectly defined as the open way of thinking characterized by the absence of boundaries between the logical and illogical (Conde, 2004), a cognitive intuition (Maritain, 1952) and a theodical disposition that resonates within the hearts of the Bikolanos (Fr. Tria in Serra and Bañares, 2015). In this study, open rationality is derived from the philosophy of paghurophurop, which is guided with the Bikolnon's orag (creativity and wit) and dunong (wisdom) that establish a space of positional resistance and identity, and eventually attempt to create and re-create positions in cultural studies and literature. This theorizing in progress is a preliminary interrogation of orality, metaphor, poetics, and conservatism in tigsik. The concept has been borrowed from Homi Bhabha's Third Space, Almario's nativist essentialism, and Tria's discourse of yaon (being). Hence, to further explore the richness of these postcolonial configurations, it is recommended that readers engage with the poems through the lens of linguistic reclamation, appreciating the significance of the Bikolano language in asserting cultural identity. This engagement will deepen understanding of the poets' efforts to preserve and revitalize indigenous languages, fostering a greater appreciation for linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. Moreover, readers may then examine the poems' use of traditional literary forms and their ability to connect modern issues with cultural heritage. By analyzing the tigsik form and its application to contemporary concerns, readers can gain insights into the adaptability and relevance of indigenous literary practices. This interrogation highlights the dynamic nature of cultural heritage and its role in addressing modern realities. Finally, it is recommended that readers consider the poems' critique of government and social inequities, focusing on how the poems address systemic issues and advocate for social justice. By exploring the poets' engagement with contemporary socio-political issues, readers can better understand the role of literature in critiquing and challenging systemic inequities. This focus on social critique will underscore the importance of literature as a tool for advocacy and change, highlighting the poets' commitment to social justice and equity.

Implication

Open rationality challenges the Western notion that reasoning is purely logical and detached from an established order. In this tigsik collection, it articulates that Bikol culture has its own way of reasoning which is an open-ended construct through poetic performance (tigsikan), creativity and wits (orag) and cultural wisdom (orag). This strengthens the idea that local knowledge systems are valid and profound, thus redefining rationality in a local context. Moreover, open rationality highlights the cultural intelligence of oral tradition. By studying tigsik as a form of open rationality, readers of this study may consider tigsik as a sophisticated mode of thinking, not a simple entertainment, because this poetry reveals the wit and wisdom of the indigenous Bikolano folks, and tigsik's rhythm, humor, and collective performance. Open rationality in tigsik resists colonial notions of rationality as purely Western, or a colonizer's established order; instead, it recognizes that through tigsik, Bikol culture possesses its own cultural and intellectual systems.

Looking back at the selected tigsiks, these texts have tried to efface the experience of colonization, but it naturally emerges from all the texts in question, revealing configurations of cultural domination and identity. It transforms the tigsik into an emerging "text" through its modern orality, millennial metaphor, and structured conservatism. These constructs are interrogated through in-depth text analysis and coding-categorization of personal interview responses and performance observations. The content's thematic and symptomatic reading has unearthed the Bikolano's orag and dunong, and it has also articulated the philosophy of paghurophurop as an emerging poetics of the nativist-structuralist postcolonialist Bikolanos. Moreover, the tigsiks' vernacular language created a border that fused the two emergent cultures. Emergent culture is a hybrid opposition and adherence to dominant culture. Bhabha in Ashcroft et.al. noted that the emergent culture carries within it the dominant culture that it opposes, resulting into a hybrid of culture - a fusion of the dominant trends of the past and a new cultural emergence. Thus, this implies that emergent culture never succeeds in creating a new culture

which is pure and free from the influence of the dominant culture because the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different - a mutation, a hybrid (1995, p. 34). This further study implies that the debate between indiginization and hybridity are particularly evident because the paratigsik's discourse - abrogation and appropriation of language made his/her tigsik unique from any other contemporary texts. The tigsik's language rejected the assumptions that Western language reveals concepts of truth, power and reality because the colonized language (vernacular) has been able to present emotion, and meaning which the English language cannot perpetuate, or Filipino language cannot contextualize the indigenous sensibilities. Moreover, paratigsiks appropriation of Filipino and English language in the tigsik for new distinctive usages created an emerging phenomenon that no matter how the paratigsik established an indigenous Self, the influence of the Other perpetuates, thus creating a hybrid Self/Other. This phenomenon conveys that "cultural practices and identities are not fixed but rather emerge from and are shaped by the spaces between cultures, creating a hybrid and fluid reality (Bhabha, 1994)," but indigenous culture must have not been alienated nor uprooted from its tradition as what Almario argues on the possibility that certain elements between Western and Filipino cultures are actually universal and common to them both. He posits that categories may be contextualized and committed to native's sensibility, a profound commitment to bring literature back to the homeland (Garcia, 2004, p. 14-15). This implies that colonialism did not completely obliterate the native forms of consciousness because native consciousness have existed and emerged in the postcolonial experiences. The paratigsik has attempted to free his/her Bikol persona especially the women paratigsiks from the yoke of patriarchy and colonization. These tigsiks have exposed the conditions of the Bikol persona in liberating the symbolic order, the philosophy of Bikolano paghurophurop. This Bikolano paghurophurop speaks out from behind the veil of silence to create a border in which both the colonizer and colonized develop a union of an emergent hybrid identity and culture. These tigsiks have raised our consciousness to reclaim and liberate our stereotype identity subjected by the colonizers because it has documented a hybrid approach of interpellation from the poet's unconscious contribution of his/her life to the textuality of the text - a space of intervention which may establish a hybrid culture or the Other and an identification of binary oppositions by decentering the center through a fusion of cultures. This hybrid culture is neither the dominant nor the emergent opposition to it. It belongs to the boundary between the two. Minh-Ha argues that "the hybrid culture/individual who stands in that undetermined threshold where he/she constantly drifts in and out, which at the same time undercuts the inside/outside opposition, his/her intervention is necessarily that of both a deceptive outsider whether he/she turns the inside out or the outside in." This hybrid culture/individual is, like the two sides of a coin, the same impure, both in one, the insider/outsider - a contradictory way in which cultural identities and practices are formed and experienced. This conveys that cultural practices and identities are not fixed, but rather emerge from and are shaped by the spaces between cultures, creating a hybrid and fluid reality (Bhabha, 1994).

"Indigenous theories have developed to accommodate the differences within the various cultural traditions, as well as the desire to describe in a comparative way the features shared across those traditions" (Ashcroft, et. al., 1989, p. 11). In this premise, paghurophurop serves as a critical tool that would carry out an indigenous critique in a postcolonial context. The possibility of rereading is a continual process of subversion and appropriation that challenges the essentialist claim of Western models. Taking the case of paghurophurop assumption within literary and cultural engagement, not oppositional but complementary to the evolving phenomenon of orality, metaphor, poetics, and conservatism. The selected tigsik submitted for interrogation in this paper initially demonstrated the distinction of marginal discourse. Despite the challenge of modernism, tigsik has altered Western convention and unconsciously blends with it. The tigsik which is evident only with the Bikolanos is considered part of minor literature or text. Minor literature, as noted by Garcia is guided by Legasto's assumption - consists of minority literatures of the tribals and the country's ethnically and linguistically disfranchised, such the non-Tagalog Christians and all the other marginalized peoples and groups in the Philippines. Garcia added that there is a need to borrow from the theorizing of our counterparts elsewhere in the postcolonial world, while at the same time taking exception to some of their ideas and categories by "supplanting" them with our own. This is the key distinction among imperially hegemonic, nationally complicit, and genuinely oppositional forms, which lies in the nature of postcolonial discourse: as a critique, it continuously engages with Western modes of representation,

with its Archives and Orientalist knowledges, while being cautious about the “universalizing tendencies” to refrain from simplifying what is an irremediably complex situation of cultural and literary production in the diverse regions of the “Third World”, which reinstitutes the binarism of Self and Other (pp. 6-7).

Tigsik like other literary forms, has also evolved in the written form, and as such is bound closely to the question of why poems are chanted or performed. The answers may be associated with the various tendencies of the text in responding to what to perform, how to perform, and why to perform at all. Almario posits that the poet and critic may consider the outline of Ang Bagong Pormalismong Filipino in illuminating the traditions in Philippine literature that can lead to the discovery of a unique and sovereign Filipino Self (Garcia, 2004, pp.17-18). Thus, production of meaning requires that these two sites be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy; introduces an ambivalence in the act of interpretation and in mimicry. The representation of identity and meaning is re-articulated along the axis of metonymy (Bhabha, 1994, p. 97).

Groyon (2023) summarized the tendencies why [texts] are written. He mentioned the tendencies by Rosario Cruz-Lucero and Jonathan Chua in the CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, and he added one, which show its interrelationships with reasons for writing and reading (p. 34). Conversely, some of the reasons in writing and in performing, in the researcher’s point of view for the latter, are didactic, realist, radical, romantic, or artistic in purpose. These all evident in the tigsik collection. Moreover, Balde and Cirujales noted that the more closely the paratigsik participates in live performances of tigsikan or tirigsikan, the more the paratigsik becomes familiar with the ways of contemplating rationally within the frame of spontaneous verbalization of thought and meaning. Thus, tirigsikan is heavily influenced by the prevailing context, whether social, cultural, educational, philosophical, or political. The context is the comprehension element of a tigsik in which words and ideas are situated.

Kristian Cordero (2022), known national artist and Bikolano once stated in his interview with Soleil David, “Our literature will certainly grow. It is in dialogue with other cultures and linguistic groups; we think and write in our local languages (Bikol language variations). Our advocacy is to make sure that all languages, particularly Bikol, are promoted and given their rightful due as languages of instruction and as languages of discourse, because when people disregard their language, they will automatically disregard their identities (p. 78).

Finally, the tigsik is not only a literary piece but also an oral tradition, imbued with the nuances of performance, including tone, rhythm, and the interactive engagement between the performer and the audience. The limited documentation that exists barely scratches the surface of this rich tradition, offering scant written records and infrequent accounts of the performative aspects of tigsik. This dearth of material was strengthened through interviews to validate the transmission of this art from the present situation to future generations. Spradley (1979) noted that ethnographic interviews assist informants to respond as informants (pp. 58-59). Moreover, physical observation and/or viewing is an integral component in gathering raw data directly from performances of oral forms in digital platforms and live performances. Here, the grounded-ethnographic approach presupposes an illumination for readers of tigsik understand one’s own culture, literary art, and heritage, which necessitates thick description and elaboration. Moreover, such an endeavor would contribute to the broader field of Philippine literature and oral traditions, enriching our understanding of the diverse cultural expressions within the country. Therefore, the call to action is not merely academic but also cultural, aiming to preserve and celebrate the heritage of tigsik for posterity. Ong (1989) once posited that an oral poet is not working with texts or in a textual framework. He needs time to let the story sink into his own store of themes and formulas, time to “get with” the story. In recalling and retelling the story, he has not, in any literate sense, “memorized” its metrical rendition. The fixed materials in the bard’s memory are a float of themes and formulas out of which all stories are variously built. The bards rely on his experience to learn: by listening for months and years to other bards who never sing a narrative the same way twice but who use over and over again the standard formulas in connection with the standard themes. Finally, while the quest for tigsik in text (print) has opened it for continuous revision to create tigsik in its best artistic form. In a more recent overview, the local poets: Balde (2024), Cirujales

(2022), Banzuela (2011) agree on several substantial features of tigsik, described as follows: (1) the poem is a poetic joust or toast; (2) originates in oral tradition and may be translated to print; (3) delivered or chanted extemporaneously or instantaneously; (4) opens with the remark, tigsik or tinigsik; (5) may vary in length (measure) and lines to stanza; (6) the themes revolve around any subject, from religion and tradition to love and sex, and the like; (7) the poem requires a rejoinder from other paratigsik to demonstrate its tradition; (8) the poem is recited mostly by men on various occasions; (9) as a cultural form, tigsik is recited at culminating activities and other social functions; and (10) tigsik recitation is heard at gatherings for purposes of relaxation, the exercise of wit, and life's reflection (meditation)..

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