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Eleanor A. Rivera  
healingpresent@gmail.com

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**GOING HOME:  
THE RELEVANCE OF PHILIPPINE FOLKTALE  
TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

**By**

**Eleanor A. Rivera**

**Mentor: Dr. Frank Pignatelli**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Masters of Science in Education  
Bank Street College of Education  
1996**

## Abstract

### **Going Home: The Relevance of Philippine Folktale in Early Childhood Education**

**ELEANOR A. RIVERA**

This study focuses on the value of introducing Philippine folktales to children of Filipino heritage. My primary objective in this project is to demonstrate how Philippine folktales can serve as a potent vehicle for taking American-born Filipino children home, that is teaching them about their roots and celebrating their cultural identity. I believe that by recognizing their Filipino heritage the children gain a fuller appreciation of and pride in their uniqueness as well as the interest and ability to share aspects of their culture with other children. It is my hope that consideration of their own cultural identity will help the children become more tolerant, accepting and respectful of individual differences. A secondary objective of this study is to explore possible connections between parents' attitudes in imparting awareness of Filipino heritage and how their children react to the Philippine folktale introduced to them.

The observations and conclusions presented in this thesis were developed through the use of field-based qualitative accounts. During this study I presented age appropriate Philippine folktales to children between the ages of three and ten and observed their reactions, asked them questions about the stories, and allowed them to interpret the folktales through artwork. In addition, I conducted interviews with the children's parents.

## DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated:

To my precious love, Michelle whose appreciation and pride of her Filipino heritage has inspired me to touch other children's lives;

To Gugs, without whose support, contribution, love and belief in me, this paper would not have been possible;

To Esteb, without whose patience, tolerance, listening ears, understanding of my demands, this paper would not have been completed;

To Terry, Rick, and Manette, my shopping mall companions, without whose friendships and caring, I would never have kept my sanity as I struggled through finalizing this paper;

To Helen Freidus and Frank Pignatelli, who have provided encouragement, exhibited a dedication to education and served as exemplary role models in my quest for the ideals of being an educator;

and most especially,

To my soulmate who will forever be my source of strength and inspiration, and without whose unconditional love amidst my confusion, I would never have been able to find where home is.

To all of you, I will forever be grateful!

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## I. RATIONALE

Growing up in the Philippines, I was enchanted by native folktales. The local legends and stories brightened my childhood. While we snacked on ricecakes, Tatay (Grandpa) Primo, my grandfather used to tell me a lot of folktales after my afternoon siesta. I vividly remember how, as a four year old, I would put my feet on his lap as we sat by the biggest window of his old, almost dilapidated house made of bamboo and nipa (a kind of a palm tree) leaves. Looking forward to hearing his stories, I sometimes could not wait until my half-hour siesta time was over. I would run straight to his house which was right in front of our house. Sometimes before telling a story, Tatay Primo would pose a riddle for my older sisters and me to solve, and he would give the winner an extra ricecake. I could listen to Tatay Primo's tales for hours staring at his big brown eyes and very kind face.

Looking back, I realize that through these folktales my grandfather truly opened a whole different world for me - the world of imagination. His stories brought me to a lot of different places which offered me insights into how people can be so different from one another and how varied people live and interact with each other.

The primary objective of this study is to provide

field-based qualitative accounts by focusing on what it means for the children involved to "go home" through the Philippine folktales. Observing the awakening of the children through the process of acquainting themselves with Philippine folktales, I realize that they value this initial introduction to the Filipino people/culture which they are a part of; and it can serve as a potent vehicle for knowing their roots; their "home". Being awakened, they can pay attention to the beauty and richness of their own Filipino heritage and thus gain a fuller appreciation of and pride in sharing their uniqueness with other children. I further hope that they will become more tolerant, accepting and respecting of individual differences. This process of "going home" for the children; of knowing their roots and celebrating and reflecting on one's cultural identity can broaden and deepen them as learners; enriched and inspired learners in a multicultural society.

A secondary objective of this study is to explore possible connections of the parents' attitudes in imparting awareness of the Filipino heritage with how their children react to the Philippine folktale presented to them by me.

The study focuses on two groups of children who were born in this country and are of Filipino background; with either one or both parents being Filipinos. The first group comprises four children between three to five years old. I adapted a Philippine folktale which I called The Lonesome Snail to read to them. This story has illustrations which are

developmentally appropriate for this group of children.

The second group of children is composed of four children between seven to ten years old. The Philippine folktale which I selected for them is one I have entitled The Gift Of Rice. I adapted this legend into a text without illustration and presented it to the children orally just as my grandfather did with me. Telling the story in this manner was intended to trigger the children's creativity and imagination. It would be developmentally appropriate to expect to gather from this group richer, more thoughtful insights and reactions to the tale told to them.

### The Importance of Folktales

#### **A. To Awaken the Capacity to Imagine**

By presenting Philippine folktales to the children, I would like to pass on to them the value of folktales in awakening their capacity to imagine. Maxine Greene (1993) aptly describes the role of works such as folktales in fostering children's creativity when she cites John Dewey: "He knew the importance of imagination when it came to rendering art from objects of experience, enabling persons to break through the 'crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness' when they did. He knew too that imagination, which is a cognitive capacity, is what frees persons to look



at things as if they could be otherwise... Even in elementary school, children are able - if introduced to paintings or melodies or stories or plays - to create their own visions of experiential possibility. Gradually, as they grow, they become conscious of looking through unaccustomed lenses; they begin to understand how and why encounters with art forms defamiliarize what lies around. Things obscured by routines and habits surge into presentation before them; and in some way they understand. Understanding, they are awakened to pay heed" (p. 47).

According to Tolkien (1966), when folktales are successfully crafted, such stories represent "story making in its primary and most potent mode" (p. 70). They offer the reader certain qualities which realistic stories do not offer, or do not offer in the same degree; what Tolkien calls recovery, escape and consolation. Tolkien explains how folktales can provide fresh perspectives on those people, objects, and ideas that have become blurred and distorted by familiarity and trite. To him, folktales represent a willful attempt on the part of the writer to transcend the petty problems and mundane concerns of the modern world. They provide a place of refuge, a solace in a world filled with "hunger, thirst, poverty, pain, sorrow, injustice, death" (p. 83). Folktales provide an escape and a kind of consolation in a way that they satisfy "primordial human desires" such as the desire "to survey the depths of space and time" and the desire

"to hold communion with other living things" (p. 84).

The Russian poet Kornei Chukovsky (1963) emphasized in his book, From Two to Five, the need for children to have an outlet for imagination so that creativity can be fostered. Rejecting the criticism that fantasy and nonsense verse are harmful to children's sense of reality, Chukovsky (1963) argues that fantasy is worthwhile and even important for children: "Why do they think that if a child reads this fairy tale he will most certainly turn away from technology and will henceforth daydream about firebirds to the end of his days? How did they arrive at this categorical position - either the fairy tale or the dynamotor? As if the most uninhibited fantasy and imagination were not needed for the inventing of the dynamotor! Fantasy is the most valuable attribute of the human mind and it should be diligently nurtured from earliest childhood, as one nurtures musical sensitivity - and not crushed. Fantasy is a quality of the highest importance" (pp. 116-117). I agree with Chukovsky's defense of fantasy; I do not know how I would have survived my rough childhood without the ability to fantasize...without the ability to escape reading wonderful fairy tales!

Rejecting the duality between the worlds of science and art, Chukovsky (1963) continues to say that "without imaginative fantasy there would be complete stagnation of both physics and chemistry, because the formulation of new hypotheses, the invention of new implements, the discovery of

new methods of experimental research, the conjecturing of new chemical fusions - all these are products of imagination and fantasy.....The fairy tale is for every normal child the most wholesome food - not just a tidbit but his nourishing daily bread, and no one has the right to deprive him of this health-giving, irreplaceable food" (p. 118).

#### **B. To Recognize and Learn to Cope with the Adversity in Life**

Bettelheim and Zelan (1981) maintain that children intrinsically seek meaning in what they read. They say that in order to want to learn to read, the child needs to see that meaningful content is the reward for the effort. According to Bettelheim (1976), folktales are "imminently meaningful" to children. They answer the questions: "What is the world really like? How am I to live my life in it? How can I truly be myself?" Folktales acknowledge struggle and severe difficulties in life as an unavoidable intrinsic part of human existence. The message that folktales convey to children, the author believes, is "that if one does not shy away, but steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and at the end emerges victorious" (p.8).

Folktales accomplish this end by presenting human problems in a form which is accessible to children. The fairy tale takes the existential anxieties and dilemmas of childhood

(such as desperate feelings of loneliness and isolation, fear of the dark, of some anima, anxiety about one's body, etc.) very seriously and addresses itself directly to them: "The need to be loved and the fear that one is thought worthless; the love of life, and the fear of death. Further, the fairy tale offers solutions in ways that the child can grasp on his level of understanding" (Bettelheim, 1976, p. 10).

Bettelheim goes on to say that "Fairy tales are unique, not only as a form of literature, but as works of art which are fully comprehensible to the child, as no other form of art is. As with all great art, the fairy tale's deepest meaning will be different for each person, and different for the same person at various moments of his life. The child will extract different meaning from the same fairy tale, depending on his interests and needs of the moment. When given the chance, he will return to the same tale when he is ready to enlarge on old meanings, or replace them with new ones" (p. 12).

Howarth (1989) also recognizes the importance of fairy tales to children as they face difficult moments and issues: "Growing up inevitably presents problems to children. Some of the universal problems are separation from parents, taking care of oneself in the outside world, controlling impulses, and learning which strangers are trustworthy. Children receive help from both nursery tales (those with morals) and fairy tales, those in which the meaning is often hidden and can be different for each listener" (p. 5).

Fairy tales present children with difficult issues and allow, even encourage, children to consider their responses. According to Bettelheim (1976), "The fairy tale...leaves all decisions up to us, including whether we wish to make any at all. It is up to us whether we wish to make any application to our life from a fairy tale, or simply enjoy the fantastic events it tells about. Our enjoyment is what induces us to respond in our own good time to the hidden meanings, as they may relate to our life experience and present state of personal development" (p. 12). Fairy tales, and folktales in general<sup>1</sup>, offer meaning on so many different levels, and enrich the child's existence in so many ways, that no one book can do justice to the multitude and diversity of the contributions such tales make to the child's life. Bettelheim (1976) elaborates by stating that: "Fairy tales enrich the child's life and give it an enchanted quality just because he [sic] does not quite know how the stories have worked their wonder on him" (p. 19).

Howarth (1989) accurately captures the capacity of fairy tales to challenge children: "In order to solve life's problems one must take risks, one must confront the worst that might happen. Children, like the rest of us, ruminate and worry about these worst things. Fairy tales confront them. This is the chief reason many adults have trouble with fairy tales. They think they can protect children from the hard realities of life. That is the real myth and the children know

it" (p. 6).

What a relief it is for a child to find that the things she or he is worried about are taken seriously! Children think a lot about death, separation, and divorce. None of us wants to think about these painful possibilities, yet we must (Howarth 1989). According to Luthi (1976), talking about such troubling issues and telling stories in which people experience them give both children and adults the opportunity to bring them into the open and look at them - with other people. In folktales, stepparents, witches, trolls and wolves do all the "bad things" people are not supposed to do, but do. According to Howarth (1989), from the tales, children learn the results of those negative acts for both themselves and others; the stories do not make the bad things go away but do give each child an opportunity to examine with others how those dark sides make them feel and what their possible consequences might be.

Kranowitz (1992) identifies folktales as being indeed "just like life". He elaborates on the usefulness of such stories: "The messages in classic stories and rhymes are sound. They tell us to be creative, to think critically, to challenge the odds rather than letting the odds defeat us. They instruct us to have the courage of our convictions. Meanwhile, they comfort us because they teach that our hopes and fears, expectations and disappointments are not ours alone; others, like Cinderella, The Three Billy Goats Gruff,

and the Eensy, Weensy Spider have paved the way. Like these literary models, we too can prevail" (p. 5).

Neugebauer (1992) points out that fairy tales have long been used to convey important life lessons, even to young children. In her article "Little Red Riding Hood Meets the Wolf - Again and Again and Again" she quotes Janet Tubbs of Creative Concepts for Children: "Three and four year olds do not analyze stories and fairy tales - they know immediately the message being conveyed. Ethics and morals were taught for centuries through myths and fairy tales" (p. 6).

Concerns often surface about sharing folktales with young children. Neugebauer (1992) claims that despite the deficiencies of some stories, folktales have great value: "It is true, some tales are violent and some are sexist; those uncomfortable for the adult can be left on the shelf. There are so many tales and so many versions of each tale to choose from. Or, adults can use thoughtful discussions with children to enable them to deal with those issues without losing the magic. Folktales offer to the world of childhood a wealth of wonderful characters and events and vivid lessons that provide a rich and exciting contrast to the adventure of the many insipid characters (Care Bears and Smurfs) and violent heroes (GI Joe and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles) of current culture" (p. 11). Not to mention the Power Rangers!

When some folktales bring up issues such as violence, sexism and the like, the important thing to keep in mind is

that we are dealing in storytelling with the symbolic use of language. As a teacher or as a parent, one may indeed know that a particular story might be too frightening to a child. As mentioned earlier, there are many others to choose from. However, adults should not be afraid to let children experience their fears or frustrations through stories. In folk and fairy tales, there is always a resolution for the hero or heroine - an overcoming of danger or difficulty (Jaffe, 1991). The role of the adult is to choose appropriate stories and adapt the literature to the children's needs and expectations.

Responding to the concern that folktales are too scary for children, Howarth (1992) suggested: "So we talk about what you can do if you get scared while listening to the story: hold the hand of the person sitting next to you, come and stand close to the teacher, or - if you are very frightened - climb up on her lap" (p. 9).

It is my hope that the Philippine folktales I introduce to the children in this study will somehow educate, support and liberate their emotions. Hopefully, the stories will hold the children's attention, entertain them and arouse their curiosity. Not only is it hoped that the stories can stimulate their imagination to enrich their lives but also be able to help them to develop their intellect and to clarify their emotions; be attuned to their anxieties and aspirations; give full recognition to their difficulties, while at the same time



suggesting solutions to the problems which perturb them. In short, I would like the stories to relate to all aspects of the children's personalities without ever belittling them. On the contrary, I want to stories to give full credence to the seriousness of the children's predicament and simultaneously promote confidence in themselves and in their future.

**C. To Communicate Cultural Values and to Widen Horizons (via Philippine Folktales)**

In pursuing the relevance of Philippine folktales in early childhood education, I would also like to consider the existing diversity that America has become. With the presence of racial issues and injustice in this society, educators have an enormous challenge and responsibility to encourage not only mere tolerance and acceptance but, even further, appreciation of each other in the classroom. As Jaffe (1991) says, "If we can feel receptive and open to different linguistic systems, to different cultural ideas and images, we can model the kind of attitude of acceptance and openness that our children need to experience from the adults in their educational settings" (p. 1). As educators, all of us cannot experience every culture that our children bring with them into the classroom as part of their family background. We cannot actually visit every country which our children represent - that would be impossible. We can and should however include in our curricula the study of other cultures

and peoples. Exposing the eight children in my study to Philippine folktales is my attempt to give them the chance to experience Philippine culture and the Filipino people and to provide them as Jaffe says "rich opportunities for cognitive growth and learning skills in many areas" (p. 1).

When the stories available in the classrooms depict accurate, unsteretyped accounts of different peoples and cultures, children are exposed to the larger world beyond their own families. With some guidance from teachers, children are more likely to see these differences as opportunities for learning about this vast and interesting world in which we live. Bringing multicultural education into the classroom, the teacher has a vital role to play in responding to the "erosion of humane, democratic culture" (Pignatelli, 1993). In the classroom, everyone has the "collective responsibility", bearing in mind the cultural, socio-economic diversity of the group - to not just tolerate but respect differences. As Pignatelli (1993) asserts: "We need a discourse capable of sustaining an ongoing mutual regard for each other" (p. xi); respecting and appreciating individual differences.

Incorporated into the Philippine folktales that I present to the children are some actual Filipino words and phrases so they will hear what the Filipino language sounds like. Chomsky (1976) maintains that children are born with the ability to recognize the sound of all the languages of the world. As they

grow older, they learn to speak and hear only the sounds that are being taught to them, and they eventually lose all the other sounds. Chomsky proposes that each child is born with a "language acquisition device" (LAD), which he believes is programmed to recognize the universal rule that underlies any particular language that a child might hear. Therefore, young children, even of preschool age, are very capable of learning different languages easily. With the Filipino language included in the stories, the children will have the opportunity to experience for themselves what it feels like to hear and even speak Filipino.

Sharing folk literature enriches children's expressive language. The richness and beauty of language found in authentic versions of folktales contribute to children's language development. "Words open up worlds for children" (Glazer, 1989, p. 16). Children learn through both simple statement and rich, expressive figurative language. The magical language of folk literature grows in the child listening to the stories. Even before children can produce the words, as listeners, they sense the music of language (Bosma, 1987).

The introduction of Philippine folktales to these eight children gives each an opportunity to experience the Philippine culture, values and traditions and the Filipino language which provides not only opportunities for cognitive growth and learning skills in many areas but just as

significantly opens the door for them to know their roots, their "home".

This process of "going home" for the children; of knowing their roots and celebrating and reflecting one's cultural identity can broaden and deepen them as learners. Both enriched and inspired by these stories, these children will have more to share; having a legacy, having a past to share with others in their present, multicultural world.

#### **D. To Preserve Cultural Identity**

Another valuable task I would like to accomplish in this endeavor of introducing Philippine folktale to young children of Filipino heritage born in this country is to provide the children fuller appreciation of and to instill pride in the many facets of our native culture that together shape the Filipino identity and character.

The foreword of the Kalinangan Series of the Philippine Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (1986) which seeks to provide source materials on the folk culture of the different regions of the Philippines suggests the richness and diversity of Filipino heritage: "Folk cultures are roots that are expressive of the inescapable fact that we are inextricably bound by common origins and suggestive of what probably we fatally overlook - that in the indigenous ways and lores of our people may lie the elusive answer to many of the

crucial questions that confront us as a nation. We have only to ponder on the technological marvel that is the rice terraces of the Ifugaos or the fierce independence of the Muslims to be reminded that as a people we are heir to ancient traditions that nourish virtue of self reliance, ingenuity and strength of character and preserve the enriching sense of beauty emanating from our fathers' arts, music, dances, games and folklore. By accident of history, these virtues and strengths have been relegated to mere cultural artifacts or interesting topics of scholarly studies. But beneath the colonial veneer of our history, they remain strong, waiting to be rediscovered" (p. 3).

With a large number of ethnic groups in the Philippines, about a dozen of them, every ethnic group has its own distinct oral literature. If we assume that the ethnic groups of the Philippines had, before the coming of the Spaniards in 1521, highly developed oral literatures, then the oral literatures of some groups must have deteriorated. This deterioration can be attributed largely to western colonial education and influence in the Philippines which persist until today (Constantino, 1976).

In the Third National Folklore Congress held in the Philippines in 1976, Ernesto Constantino urged the several folklorists and educators in the audience to utilize oral literature as means of preserving cultural identity and for national development: "Our strongest reason for studying our

oral literatures should be the genuine desire to use them for the cultural advancement and unification of the Filipinos. Implied in this statement is the strong belief in the crucial and beneficial role of our oral literature in our cultural and national development.....It does seem that our system of education based on the exclusive use of a foreign language (English) and its literature has made us ignorant of and uninterested in if not blatantly averse to our own oral literatures, and has alienated us from our own traditions and society. I believe that our oral literatures can be used and should be used as a powerful antidote to the cultural alienation that Filipinos are suffering from" (p. 8).

Constantino (1976) quoting Dean Fansler<sup>2</sup>, wrote: "Looking backward (in Philippine history), one can not help feeling resentment that so much linguistic ability was devoted to foreign alien beliefs upon Filipinos. And so little, almost negligibly little, to making a record in their own languages, of old beliefs and traditional literature. How easily authentic pre-Spanish traditions, poetry and ritual might have been preserved, and how precious even the slightest fragments would now seem in comparison with the miserable pious writings in the vernaculars that the early clerical linguists have bequeathed to us!" (p. 11).

Also at the same Folklore Congress in 1976, Dr. Damiana Eugenio emphasized the task of nation building, of promoting national understanding and unity by knowing and understanding

the totality of Philippine proverbs. "It is generally accepted that to really know a people one should know its literature, for literature is the spiritual record of a nation. The literature of a people expresses the people's values and ideals, their hopes and fears, their aspirations and frustrations - in short, their collective soul. Applied to the Philippine situation, this means that to know ourselves, really and completely as Filipinos, we should know our literature, by which, I mean of the various regions or linguistic groups that comprise the country" (p. 5).

For the purposes of this paper, I would like to concentrate on folktales that reveal Filipino attitudes towards life, the value and charm of our traditions, the beauty and the richness of our customs, the uniqueness of our mores and beliefs, as well as the pitfalls or frailties of our idiosyncracies.

Together with the desire to contribute to the as-yet elusive goal of national development of our country through the education and development of children, as an educator, I would like to share with the children the enduring gift of Philippine folktales which will enable them to grow and mature and utilize their imagination to be caring and compassionate human beings.

## II. METHODOLOGY: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

Qualitative researchers aspire to enrich human discourse (Geertz in Philipsen and Agnew, 1995) by providing interpretations - or partial accounts - of certain matters. They generally do not strive to discover an objective "Truth" that, given the appropriate sample, control, and method is generalizable to a larger population. Qualitative research is based on the assumption that social phenomena are dynamic. They change over time because human behavior is both unpredictable and at least partially shaped by the free will of social agents (Cziko in Philipsen and Agnew, 1995). In other words, since people make choices, although within certain social constraints, they adapt their behavior to newly evolving circumstances.

The methodological perspective of this study is primarily interpretive and interactionist. Through description and interpretation, the responses (verbal, nonverbal gestures, written as well as artistic illustrations) of the children and the parents, to me as the interviewer and presenter of the Philippine folktales, are made meaningful and understandable by bringing them before the reader (Leavitt, 1995).

According to Leavitt (1995), in general, interpretive and interactionist research poses the fundamentally relational, social aspect of our existence and the inescapable fact that human beings are part of the world they study. Children and



their parents are meaning-makers engaged in joint acts and constructed and constrained by the specific and at-large social situations in which they find themselves. Interpretations and understandings of situated, ongoing interactions of particular individuals with me are developed within the immediate context in which they occur. Far from being detached and neutral, interpretation begins from concerned engagement. The understandings that emerged are viewed as social constructions, value-laden, historically specific, grounded in experience and always incomplete.

My immersion into the world of children and their parents I discuss here involved six months of participant-observation. The primary objective of this study is to provide field-based accounts of how Philippine folktales can be valuable to the children. The secondary objective is to explore possible connections of the parents' attitudes in imparting awareness of the Philippine culture, values and traditions with how their children react to the Philippine folktales presented to them by me.

### **Data Sources**

The sampling method I used in this study is what Goetz and LeCompte (in Merriam, 1988) call criterion-based sampling. Criterion-based sampling requires that one establishes the criteria bases, or standards necessary for units to be

included in the investigation; one then finds a sample that matches these criteria. The researcher creates a "recipe of the attributes essential to one selected unit and proceed(s) to find or locate a unit that matches the recipe" (Goetz and LeCompte in Merriam, 1988).

The study is divided into two parts. The first part is focused on four American-born children between the ages of three and five years old. The second part is focused on four American-born children between ages seven and ten years old.

Four of these eight children have parents who are both Filipinos and the other four have Filipino and non-Filipino parents.

After my initial research, observing and interacting with three to five year olds, I decided to extend the study by including a second batch of children between ages seven and ten, believing that it would be developmentally appropriate to expect to gather from this group richer, more thoughtful insights and reactions from the folktales told to them.

### **Data Collection**

The study was conducted over a six-month period. The first three months were spent with the younger group of children and the last three months were spent with the older group of children. Interviews with parents and children as well as reading sessions with children were audiorecorded and

subsequently transcribed.

I collected data and subsequently reached my findings through the use of direct observation, in-depth/open-ended interviewing, analysis of children's drawings and predominantly, the textual analysis of transcriptions of audiotaped conversations between the children me and between the parents and me.

Interviews of the parents were initiated with a telephone call in which I identified myself and explained that I was "working on my master's degree thesis on Philippine folktale and its relevance to early childhood education". All the parents I interviewed are my close acquaintances and I found that the level of personal relationships we were in seemed to make a difference in the reception of my study. I found that I was well received by them as an interviewer and as a "teacher" reading to their children a Philippine folktale. In my initial telephone call, I would not only establish a specific time for the interview, but I would seek to answer any questions the parents had about the nature of the study, and I promised confidentiality. (The real names of all parents and children who participated in the study are not used in my thesis.)

For the younger group of children, the parents were asked questions that dealt with a wide range of issues including what holidays and celebrations are observed in their homes; how Filipino culture and identity are being introduced to

their children; and the way the parents want their child to perceive himself or herself being in a multicultural environment.

For the older group of children, the children themselves were interviewed. Questions in the interview focused on how the children perceive the Philippines; what they know and have learned about the Philippines, and how they perceive themselves to be - Filipinos/Americans, half Filipino-half American; Non-Filipinos, etc.; what their favorite Filipino foods, if any, are and if they eat rice.

The parents of the older group of children were also interviewed. Questions in the interview focused on how they introduce Filipino culture and identity to their children, and what value and/or relevance, if any, they assign to Filipino culture and identity.

Most of the interviews began with me briefly restating what I had told them on the telephone.

The issues mentioned above were not always tackled in a particular order, and the actual wording of questions varied a great deal across different interviews. I dropped and added questions spontaneously depending on the flow of the conversation. In a way, my interview guide served as a basic "checklist" to insure that all relevant topics were being covered.

In the interviews, I generally avoided dichotomous questions (questions that invite "yes" or "no" answers).

Rather, I asked what Michael Quinn Patton (1987) calls "truly open-ended questions" which permit a respondent to respond in his or her own terms...They do not presuppose which dimensions of feeling, analysis, or thought will be salient for the interviewee. The truly open-ended question allows the person being interviewed to select from among that person's full repertoire of possible responses (pp. 122-123).

The questions were meant to serve "as catalysts" for the interviewees to express their opinions, beliefs, and experiences in whatever way they chose. By asking a broad "open" question as, for example, "What do you think is the value of introducing Filipino culture/identity to your child, if any?", I allowed the parents to choose the direction of their answers. Their answers could be generalizations, or they could take the form of concrete examples in regard to their own childhood experiences. Parents could talk about ideals or limitations, about hopes, disappointments, wishes or plans. Consequently, the interviews routinely "farmed out" in different directions on the basis of a given question or response. The interviewees determined how to answer the questions, and together we followed up on their answers and probed deeper. It was as important to understand why the parents answered in a certain manner as to know what they actually said (Philipsen and Agnew, 1995).

Each interview with both parents lasted at least one hour; many ran for several hours. All the interviews were

conducted at their home except for one pair who preferred to have the interview and all of my sessions with their daughter in my home because they were "embarrassed by the size of their apartment".

Direct observations and participant observations were done during the interview of parents; on how the interactions were between parents and the children; and how the interactions were between me and the children as I presented to them the Philippine folktale. The field notes and comments I recorded during my observations served as a means of calling attention to speculation or issues to be explored in future data collection and analysis. I wrote theoretical memos (Glaser and Strauss in Reitzug, 1994) following my observations and used them to draw connections between observed behaviors and their relationship to the study's focus.

As a researcher, my primary observational stance was that of an outsider, although I assumed a more participative role when appropriate. In presenting the Philippine folktales to the children, I became a participant having an active role in relating to the children.

The eight families had a minimum of two visits each. Additional visits were determined based on the parents and the children's response to the first two visits. Each visit lasted at least two hours including the interviews of the parents and the reading session with the children; most lasted for several

hours.

With the younger group of children, I started the first visit by interviewing the parents. During the next part of the session I read to the child a Philippine folktale I called The Lonesome Snail.

In the case of the older group of children, I again started the first visit with an interview of the parents. During the next part of the session I interviewed the child and introduced the Philippine folktale that I would tell with the question: "Do you eat rice?" The folktale I presented to them I entitled The Gift Of Rice. Rice is a staple food of the Filipinos and one which I am pretty sure the children have been exposed to through Filipino parties among friends and relatives, if it is not eaten regularly as part of their meals at home.

This second folktale has more of a Philippine orientation to it as opposed to the story about the snail used with the younger group of children. I hoped choosing such a story would aid the children to be able to make a stronger connection to their Filipino heritage; that this folktale could hit home to them and take them "home". The story touches on issues of recognizing one's identity and cultural background and understanding that groups of people differ and being able to accept, tolerate and appreciate each other's differences. The story celebrates the intermingling and sharing of each other's uniqueness and being able to help and gain additional

knowledge from each other which makes everyone's lives richer and happier.

In contrast with the folktale that was read to the younger group of children about the snail, the folktale that was told to the older group of children about the legend of the rice has no illustrations. I believed it would be developmentally appropriate for this group of children between ages seven and ten to present the story in this form, as spoken word. This way, their imagination and creativity would be fully heightened and developed.

During the first visit, I determined what medium/media (be it crayon, watercolor, tempera paint, collage, and/or clay) each particular child would be at ease with in illustrating his or her response to the story which I presented.

On the second visit, since I realized the need for the children to revisit the story in order to remember it sufficiently to illustrate and/or discuss with me their reaction to the story, I presented to the child the same story from the first session. After reading or telling the story for the second time, I audiorecorded the conversations and verbal responses of the child.

In the course of my sessions with the children, I observed differences in the abilities of the children to convey their reactions to the stories. Judy Pasamanick (1978) describes the role of the teacher in helping children



communicate their thoughts: "If you are a teacher, aide or assistant, a paraprofessional, or a parent, you will know the pleasures and trials of children who are ripe with thoughts and are searching for words to reveal them. Some seem so fluent, others so blocked - all are potentially so verbal. No child needs to be taught to talk; what many need is to be helped to express more fully, more accurately, even more subtly, the ideas and emotions that fill their young minds" (p. VI). After presenting the folktale, I helped each child to express himself or herself fully through a medium which he/she was at ease and familiar with; be it through crayons, tempera paint, clay, collage or through writing (by dictation for the younger group of children). Pasamanick asserts "Such writing should be grounded in a carefully-nourished capacity to view the world from a variety of perspective" (p. VIII), and I wanted to allow each child to convey a reaction to the story in whatever way he or she wanted.

Through writing, verbal expression and drawings, the children were able to offer their own opinion and ideas about the story and the characters.

The younger group of children, aside from their illustrations, could also write (through dictation to me) or discuss what they would do or how they would feel in a similar situation, describing and connecting their own experiences with those of the literature.

The older group of children were encouraged to illustrate

and write how it was for them to experience being part of the events that happened in the story. They were asked to imagine how it was when this story happened so they could paint a clear picture for me to understand better the story. I asked them: "Imagine that you were one of the characters mentioned in the story, relate to me and show me your favorite part of the story."

### III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. These are the four children between ages three and five years old whom I read the tale *The Lonesome Snail* to:

Elizabeth Edwards was born on March 30, 1992. At the time the study was conducted, she was three years and seven months old. Her parents are Evangeline, a Filipina born in the Philippines, and Eric, an American of Italian origin. Elizabeth started going to a day care center since September 1995 three times a week for two-and-a-half hours a day. She is the eldest of two children.

Fred Ferrer was born on September 21, 1991. At the time the study was conducted, he was four years and two months old. His parents are Felisa, a Filipina born in the Philippines, and Felix, an American of Hispanic origin. Fred started going to a day care center since September 1995 three times a week for two-and-a-half hours a day. By October 19, 1995, he had to

be pulled out of school because of medical reasons. His parents are hoping for him to obtain medical clearance and be back in school by January 1996. Fred is the eldest of two children.

Gloria Gabor was born on May 15, 1991. At the time the study was conducted, she was four years and six months old. Her parents, Grace and Gilberto were both born in the Philippines but came over to this country when they were eleven years old. Gloria started going to a day care center since September 1994 three times a week for two-and-a-half hours a day. She is the middle child of three children.

Iris Iligan was born on March 2, 1992. At the time the study was conducted, she was three years and eight months old. Both her parents, Irene and Ignacio, were born in the Philippines and came over to this country six years ago. Iris has attended a day care center since September 1995 three times a week for six hours a day. She is an only child.

B. These are the four children between ages eight and ten years old whom I told the tale *The Gift Of Rice* to:

Anna Agbayani was born on June 18, 1987. At the time the study was conducted, she was eight years and eight months old. Her parents, Amanda and Antonio, were both born in the Philippines but came over here to this country when they were 13 years old, twenty three years ago. Anna is in grade three

in a parochial school in suburban New Jersey. She is the youngest of two children.

Ben Bertucci was born on April 17, 1987. At the time the study was conducted, he was eight years and eleven months old. His parents are Belen, a Filipina born in the Philippines, and Bernardo, an American of Italian origin. Belen migrated to this country with her entire family when she was 16 years old, twenty one years ago. Ben is in grade three, in a parochial school in suburban New Jersey, and is a classmate of Anna's. He is an only child.

Carlos Cantor was born on July 19, 1985. At the time the study was conducted, he was ten years and seven months old. His parents, Catherine and Cayetano, were both born in the Philippines and came over to this country twenty three years ago. Carlos is in grade five in a public school in suburban New Jersey. He is the youngest of four children.

Dina Dershowitz was born on August 31, 1987. At the time the study was conducted, she was eight years and eight months old. Her parents are Deborah, a Filipina born in the Philippines, and David, an American of Jewish origin. Deborah migrated to this country with her entire family when she was 24 years old, twenty six years ago. Dina is in grade three in a private school in Riverdale, New York. She is the youngest of two children.

The discussion of my findings and observations is organized around the importance of folktales as reflected in

the introduction/rationale of the study.

#### A. To Awaken The Capacity To Imagine

Reading Philippine folktales to the children enabled them to expand their imagination and creativity. Children are able to create their own visions of experiential possibility (Greene, 1993). The imagination and creativity blossomed when Elizabeth brought out her musical magic wand.

EE: I wish I could see those animals in the book because I have... (Long pause as she got her magic wand to show to me)...You see, I got a wand! And watch it...(She played the tune "It's a Small World" from the wand).

ER: Wow, it plays the music as you are swaying the wand.

EE: Now I can't find you. (Pause as she swayed the wand again on my head)...Taa daah...now, I see you again.

ER: Oh, that's what happens? I can get lost and you can find me gain.

EE: Open the book. (She flipped to the page where all the four main characters of the story are present as she swayed the wand.) There...No more lost friends.

ER: Are you able to find...oooh...You are something. You have a magic wand. You just did magic. They are all there. The snail has found her three lost friends. You are some fairy you.

EE: (She had this big smile on her face, looking so happy.) And the fish is smiling too.

Elizabeth has imagined that she is the fairy with the magic wand who will help the snail find her friends - the fish, the bee, and the dragonfly. Note that the story read to

Elizabeth ended up with the snail not finding her friends, "Sobbing and searching for her friends" but she has solved the problems and provided a happy ending.

Because the folktale The Gift Of Rice was told, not read, to the older group of children, and presented without illustrations in order to really simulate oral tradition, (just like how my grandfather told me stories when I was a young child), the awakening of the children's imagination and creativity was readily apparent. The children, Anna, Ben, Carlos and Dina, were really able to create their own visions of experiential possibility as manifested by their wonderful, colorful illustrations that they were all very much invested in. I presented these children the following motivation to encourage them to illustrate their responses to the folktale: "Pretend you are the child who was with the hunting group. Can you show me through crayon, colored pencils, paint, collage, or clay? I just heard this story from my grandfather. I was not there but you were. Can you show me so I can have a better idea of what really happened?" Figures XI, XII, XIV, XVI, and XIX reveal the older children's enormous creativity and imagination to produce such paintings about the folktale shared with them. What was quite satisfying for me as the researcher to observe was the excitement and enjoyment that all the children had as they worked very thoughtfully on their illustrations. Anna even asked enthusiastically for a third session so she could continue to work on her art work. Figures

XI and XII are both hers. Carlos was having so much fun during our second session when he was mixing different colors of tempera paint that his twelve year old sister requested to join in.

As Carlos was getting so engrossed with his painting, all of a sudden, he asked: "Do you have any idea what they were wearing?"

ER: Well...

CC: Isn't this story from a long, long time ago?

ER: Yes, hundreds of years ago...long before the Spaniards came to the Philippines which was in 1521.

CC: Well, I know it's very warm there and I know they had to do a lot of walking and mountain climbing looking for wild animals. (Pause to acknowledge my nodding.) And I know the mountain people were busy planting rice in the warm climate so they must have worn shorts and sleeveless shirts only and no shoes.

Without any prompting from me, Carlos just immersed himself and let his imagination guide him to paint a rich, colorful picture of what in his mind could have happened that day when the Filipino hunting group met the Filipinos from the mountains. (See Figure XVI)

All four children chose tempera paint to respond to the challenge I presented to them instead of the other media. Interestingly enough, the use of tempera paint for these children of ages eight to ten is developmentally appropriate just as the use of crayons for the younger group (ages three to five) is.

## B. To Recognize And Learn To Cope With The Adversity In Life

Howard (1989) describes the role fairy tales play in helping children address problems and fears: "In order to solve life's problems one must take risks, one must confront the worst that might happen. Children, like the rest of us, ruminate and worry about all these worst things. Fairy tales confront them " (p. 61). What a relief for Gloria to find that the things she was so worried about were taken seriously in the folktale I read to her. She was so scared when she got separated from her parents in Disneyland last summer. Children think a lot about death, separation and divorce as Howard observed. Luthi (1976) also noted that talking about fears and telling stories in which people experience them give children, and adults, the opportunity to bring them into the open and look at them - with other people. In the process, I found that Gloria, after hearing the folktale read to her had a chance to share her fears when she was left all alone in the Disneyland hotel's huge gift shop. Perhaps, the folktale helped provide closure for her traumatic experience of getting lost and separated from her family. Her father finally found her after searching for about ten minutes (as shared by Gloria's mom).

GG: The fish got lost like me. Remember, my mommy got lost at the hotel. And then, Daddy got lost at the hotel. And then, my sister got lost at the hotel too. And my brother too. Me too, I got lost too like that fish.



ER: And then, what happened?

GG: The snail has friends. His friends are big like my daddy. Like this one (as she showed me with her right hand how tall her daddy is...taller than her). My daddy is bigger than me.

ER: You're lucky your daddy is taller than you.

GG: Remember, my daddy was taller. That's how he found me.

Grace: (Gloria's mother as she whispered this to me)  
Gee, I can't believe she remembered that. That happened months ago - last summer. We all went crazy looking for her. I thought she was with Gilberto and he thought she was with me.

While Gloria made the choice and took the risk of sharing her fearful experience of being separated from her family while they were at Disneyland last summer, Iris chose to simply enjoy the story. She had a good time imitating the sounds of the animal characters of the folktale. Iris loved to imitate the Tilapia's (fish) funny sound of "Glub, glub, glub" as she held her lips together to produce the sound. She responded like the angry dragonfly with the "Zzzit-zit", who thought that Tilapia, the fish was laughing at his bulging eyes.

Bettelheim (1976) states "Our enjoyment is what induces us to respond in our good time to the hidden meanings, as they relate to our life experiences and present state of personal development." Iris's reaction seems to bear this out. As Iris heard the story the second time, she commented when she heard that Kuhol the Snail chose to be the cook and clean the house: "Yeah, that's like me. I'm cooking when I grow up. I

want to clean the house because it's a mess." Remember Iris is the only daughter of the parents who chose to have our sessions in my house because they were "embarrassed by the size of their apartment".

Mary Howarth (1989), when discussing how folktales can give a child an opportunity to examine with others the consequences when people do "bad" things they are not supposed to do, states: "In the area of Right and Wrong, I am convinced that fairy tales are 'right on' for four- and five-year-old. Fairy tales give them patterns within which they know that will be rewarded and evil punished. In this way they learn that society feels it is right to be kind, unselfish, forgiving, thoughtful, and harmless. Witches and trolls are greedy, selfish, proud, and unfriendly. They get what they deserved" (p. 62).

Gloria realized that the dragonfly should not get so angry so his eyes will not pop out of his sockets.

ER: What do you think the dragonfly should do?

GG: He'll not get angry. He should get his eyes ahh... smaller (pause) so his eyes won't get bigger. His eyes got bigger and bigger and bigger like this circle...(as she drew red circles. See figure I).

ER: So you're saying that the dragonfly should not get angry so his bulging eyes won't pop out.

GG: Yes...and then he got bleed. He got blood in his eyes until he died...until he fell.

ER: Oh-huh - he fell because he died. He ran out of blood because it was oozing out of his sockets of his eyes.

GG: (Pause) Hmmmm...I'll...I'll...I'll not get mad. I don't laugh at this bug...because he gonna get mad.

Gloria drew a dragonfly (see Figure III) whose eyes are intact. She had this big smile when I started writing what she was saying as she described her drawing of the dragonfly.

Folktales, says Bettelheim, are "imminently meaningful to children"(p. 8). They acknowledge struggles and severe difficulties in life as an unavoidable, intrinsic part of human existence. But the message that folktales convey to children is that if they confront problems in life head on, and not run away from it, they can overcome the struggles and win the battles in life.

Elizabeth, after revisiting the story, creatively solves the snail's problems of losing all her three friends as she illustrates in Figure V.

EE: See...see...she's happy. (As she pointed at her drawing of an orange snail).

ER: Why is she happy?

EE: (With a big smile, she got louder than usual)... Because I could make a lot of friends. (She was dancing and humming a tune as she kept drawing the new friends of the snail). I could even make a fish. Here's a fish (as she pointed out her fish drawing in green crayon). See, I make one with a head...with the eyes. I told you...now she can find her friends. I can make her legs. I can draw the tail. And...perhaps the bee...

ER: Oh, she's going to find the bee too. Oh, what a lucky snail.

EE: This one is the bee. The bee, the bee, the bee...

ER: Remember, what is it called in Filipino.

EE: Putakti (as I write the name down next to the word 'bee', Dorothy had a smile on her face). Buzz, buzz, buzz. The eyes, the mouth... And she has friends. I'm gonna make another one.

ER: What are you going to make?

EE: A dragonfly. Purple for the dragonfly. (It took her a while to choose the color for the dragonfly. She named at least five other colors as she was deciding which color crayon to use - red, blue, silver, pink, yellow). Purple like Barney. I watch Barney everyday. I rake the leaves (She was running two times towards the direction of her father cutting the wood in the backyard). I finally make a dragonfly.

ER: Okay, you'll finally make a dragonfly.

EE: But I can't do it. You try it.

ER: How about the two of us do it. Remember the dragonfly whose eyes popped out.

EE: Yeah.

ER: So how do you think the dragonfly would look like with his eyes popping out?

EE: But don't make his eyes pop...pop out. Now, put them in. Okay?

ER: Okay, we'll put them in. Okay, we'll do it together...we'll try together, okay.

EE: Ooops - here - (As she pointed the space beside the green fish to indicate where she wants to draw the dragonfly). Help me...help me.

ER: Sure...sure. How do you think the head would look like with the eyes in. (Dorothy started to draw the head with the eyes.) Okay...so the eyes have to be in, huh.

EE: That one. (Sounded with a sigh of relief as she finished the whole drawing by herself.)

ER: Some curly dragonfly.

EE: Here's the mouth.

ER: That's some dragonfly with a very curly body.

EE: And that's the bee. (As she pointed out at the blue figure). This is the fish.

ER: So let's mark this. (She focused on my hand as I wrote the names of all the characters she drew with the English and corresponding Filipino names).

EE: Yes, that is the snail. This is the dragonfly.

ER: Do you remember what we call the dragonfly in Filipino?...Tutubi.

EE: Yes, tutubi.

ER: Do you want to see how it looks like in Filipino?

EE: Yes...Tu-tu-bi (She said it slowly and syllabicated it as she watched me write the word down).

Gloria resolved her concerns about the bee's body being cut into half also during the second revisit of the story. The following was my conversation with Gloria on our first revisit of the folktale:

ER: And remember this bee? Do you remember what happened to him because he got so hungry? He kept tightening his belt.

GG: And then it got tighter. And then he got pieces.

ER: That's right, he was broken into two pieces.

GG: He got two pieces like that glass (as Gloria pointed at the broken part of their glass window). It has no shape. It cut into pieces right over here. This could broke into pieces too (as she picked up a cookie from the plate in front of us).

ER: You're right. That cookie can break into pieces too.

GG: You can break it. Like that guy (as she pointed at the picture in the book of the bee whose body was cut in half with the tightening of his belt). And the flower too like that bee.

ER: You're right. That flower you can break off from the stem.

When we revisited the story during our second session, Gloria decided that the bee was not going to cut his body into half anymore. She was going to feed him. With the use of the crayon, she drew the bee (See Figure I, the black circle drawing with eyes and black and red lines underneath the circle). To help Gloria express the ideas depicted in her drawings more clearly, I encouraged her to describe what she wanted to happen. I asked her if I could write down, in her words, the strategy she creatively developed for the bee not to get thirsty as accompaniment to her drawings. Figures I and II have Gloria's story dictated to me:

The bee got thirsty. He'll drink honey. I don't like him to get hungry. I will not let him [break into] pieces. I will give him food. The bee can't get hungry. He's going to get, he's not gonna stop hungry and he can't break. He's going to drink a honey. He can drink it in a cup. That's his favorite, right?

(After a long pause, she continued.)

The bee got not hungry. The bee cut like a knife. The bee will turn into pieces.

Interestingly enough, Elizabeth had a similar strategy for the bee not to break into two pieces. She wanted to feed her pear and honey. (See Figure IV)

Neugebauer (1992) has suggested that children do not analyze folktales, they know immediately the message being conveyed. "Ethics and morals were taught for centuries through myths and fairy tales" (p. 6). I found that both groups of children in this study recognized moral lessons in the two folktales. For example, the younger children picked up on the

value of friendship, and the older children appreciated the ability of the valley people and the mountain people to overcome their differences and share their knowledge for mutual benefit.

Dina realized the message of the folktale and pointed out that although the hunting group did not win the mountain people's jewels and other valuables they instead received an enduring gift:

Well, they lost their chance to have the mountain people's jewels but they gained the knowledge about how to plant and cook rice. They don't have to move from one place to another. They have permanent homes... (Paused and nodded) Not a bad exchange. They still won! (She smiled and continued with her painting.)

Carlos was quite impressed with how the two groups of Filipinos, the hunting group from the valley and the farmers from the mountain exchanged knowledge which was mutually beneficial.

CC: The two groups were very helpful. They know how to share what they know. It's a good thing.

This form of cooperation is a Filipino value which Dioko<sup>3</sup> describes in his doctoral dissertation The Values in the Folktales of Central and Eastern Visayas: Their Implication to Education (1988):

The Visayan (referring to a major regional group in the Philippines) is a good neighbor. Towards the people of/in his immediate environ he was very much disposed to help. Whatever skills he had, he was willing to teach his friend and acquaintances in the barrio if only to help them in their struggle for survival... And when someone's life was in danger he would go out of his way to help the fellow (p. 220).

Dina picked up on the same Filipino value being conveyed by the folktale:

They all enjoyed the feast and sharing of the food. My lola (grandma) is a good cook. She cooks great Filipino food. She shares with everyone her recipe. I told her I'd like to learn how she cooks good stuff when I grow older.

As Neugebauer (1992) reiterated: "Folktales offer to the world of childhood a wealth of wonderful characters and events and vivid lessons that provide a rich and exciting contrast to the adventure of the many insipid characters (Care Bears and Smurfs) and violent heroes (GI Joe and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles) of current culture" (p. 11).

### **C. To Communicate Cultural Values And To Widen Horizons (via Philippine Folktale)**

Before I presented a story to the children, I prefaced it by relating to them that this is a story I have written which was told to me by my grandfather when I was just about their age, and that the story happened in the Philippines, the country where I and either their mothers or both parents were born.

Hopefully, having that awareness, they would pay heed to the fact that this could be a story that their parents had heard growing up in the Philippines. I was interested to find out if they could make a connection between the fact that their parents were born in the Philippines and their own Filipino identity. This will be discussed in more depth later



on.

Introducing these Filipino folktales gives the children an opportunity to experience the Philippine culture and the Filipino language and provides "such opportunities for cognitive growth and learning skills in many areas" (Jaffe, 1991, p. 1).

I intentionally incorporated some Filipino words into both of the folktales that I presented to the children (i.e. corresponding Filipino words for all the animal characters in the snail story as well as common expressions such as "ouch" and "can't find them") believing the children would not only enjoy hearing and saying these words, but also take pride in them. As Jaffe (1991) says, "If we can feel receptive and open to different linguistic systems, to different cultural ideas and images, we can model the kind of attitude of acceptance and openness that our children need to experience from the adults in the educational settings" (p. 1).

As evidenced by Figure V, Elizabeth welcomed the fact that I put the Filipino words right next to the English terms. In fact, every time she said a Filipino word, she delivered it with confidence and clarity. This was our conversation as she requested me to write the names of the animals right next to her drawings:

ER: And do you remember what the snail is in Filipino?

EE: Kuhol (said with great confidence and with a big smile).

ER: Do you want me to write down the name in Filipino?

EE: Yes, please (as she focused on my hand as I wrote the word down).

Iris was the other child who was very much at ease and ready with saying the Filipino names of the characters when we revisited the story. She imitated the other words said by some of the characters of the story with a lot of enthusiasm such as "aray-aray" (ouch!) as the mudfish felt the hook from the fishing line piercing his own mouth. Iris volunteered to say the word "waa-laa, waa-laa" (can't find them, can't find them) with full expression to show that she was sad the moment the page of the book was turned to the picture of the snail alone on top of a leaf searching for her lost friends.

During my second session with Ben, when we revisited the legend about the rice, the moment he heard me say some Filipino words and their translation in English, he interrupted the story by volunteering to sing a Filipino song for me. He was so proud and happy to sing me "Ayayay, yayay, O' Pag-ibig" (La-la-la-la-la-la Oh-Love), a Filipino love song he learned from his mother who belongs to a Filipino song and dance repertory.

Anna got so excited to realize that the new Filipino words she learned from the tale like palay (for rice) could be added on to her Filipino-English dictionary that her mother Amanda started for her three years ago. Her mother was so proud to discuss with me why her husband and she thought it would be a great idea to start Anna at an early age to be

familiar with Filipino words. They are hoping that the knowledge Anna will have about the Filipino language will come in handy for her later on in life especially in the business/professional world. Her parents realize the large number of Filipino workers in the hospital where they both work, from the janitors to the surgeons. Amanda emphasized that "This of course is not just true in the hospitals. You see Filipinos are all over in the banks, Shop-rite, even in politics. I want the children to speak the language or at least, understand it. It will be very helpful for them."

Anna, after she finished her first painting (See Figure XI) about how she imagined the meeting of the hunting group and the farming group was, decided to write about it in a glossary form. (See Figure XIII). In this glossary, she has translated three Filipino words: engkantos (fairies), barangay (group of people referring to the hunting group) and palay (uncooked rice). I was totally impressed by how much Anna had internalized what she learned from the story. This was not prompted at all. All I asked her was: "Would you care to write something about your painting?" She immediately, with a wholesome smile on her face, picked up the pen and paper and composed this glossary. As Glazer (1989) aptly puts it: Sharing folk literature enriches children's expressive language. The richness and beauty of language found in authentic version of folktales contribute to language development. "Words open up worlds for children" (p. 16).

Like Ben, Anna also volunteered to sing me the same Filipino love song, Ayayay-yayay O'Pag-ibig, which she too learned from Ben's mother. She was full of pride when she sang and also when she demonstrated how well she says Filipino phrases she picked up from her parents and other relatives. I almost could picture her saying: "See, I belong. I know something Filipino even if I cannot converse."

Dina expressed a desire to learn how to speak and understand the Filipino language with full conviction: "I want to understand and speak Filipino so I can be included in the family conversation when we are at parties with my cousins in New Jersey." She was referring to the family of her mother's brother whose wife is also Filipina. From the two very pleasant visits I had with Dina's family, I sensed that her parents encourage the two children to express what they think and feel about different issues. Dina is a highly verbal, alert, intelligent child. She sure speaks her mind so one can just imagine how frustrating it could be for her not to be included in conversation when her Filipino relatives start speaking in their own language.

Carlos expressed the same desire saying: "At home, when my father and mother start speaking in Filipino, I can understand some of what they are talking about but can't speak at all. I hope one day, I can learn to understand and speak Filipino especially since my brother and I are planning to go back to the Philippines for vacation. Just the two of us."

Ignacio: Well, I talk to Iris probably about 80% in the Cebuano language (which is one of the eight major Filipino languages). If ever I talk to her in English, it is to reinforce what I say in the dialect so she would know that that is what I meant. She was growing up speaking the dialect because then, she still did not understand the TV and the books. But after the TV and meeting people and getting to talk to them plus school, then it became very difficult for us to let her talk in the Cebuano.

Irene: And yet if she's in the house, she would ask us to talk to her in Cebuano. She'd say "Bisaya lang sa balay" (let's talk only Bisaya in the house". Bisaya is a word synonymous to Cebuano; actually the official name of the language they are referring to above).

Ignacio: So we encourage this because we do not want her to lose her identity being a child of both Filipino parents. Hopefully in the future she'd be able to communicate with our families from the Philippines because we plan (as what we have been doing) to take her back home every year...at least once in two years.

ER: So how many times has she been home?

Ignacio: It was her first trip the other year when she was one and a half years old. She had a great time.

Conversation with Eric and Evangeline:

ER: Do you make any attempts aside from teaching her Filipino songs and calling your parents "Tatay" (grandpa) and "Inay" (grandma) of imparting the Filipino values to Elizabeth?

Evangeline: Oh yeah...like the "mano" (the kissing of the hand as a sign of respect to the elders)...I tell her to do it to greet the older people.

Eric: But she doesn't do that with my family.

Evangeline: You're right. You know, I'm not even conscious I'm doing that.

All Filipino parents of the four children of the older group, though they do not make a concerted effort to speak to them in Filipino, recognize the value of the children being able to speak or at least understand the Filipino language. All of them voiced frustration in not knowing how to go about it. Belen said, "It is difficult to teach Ben Filipino. I speak to his father of course in English so he really doesn't hear me say any Filipino words. He only gets to hear me when my family visits us on weekends - my mom and my brothers and sister."

Deborah, mother of Dina, explained that "I've been so used to talking to David in English since we were married in 1968. When the children were born in mid 80's, it became such a chore to all of a sudden speak to them in Tagalog or Cebuano (two major languages that Deborah spoke growing up in the Philippines). How do you do it?"

Out of the four children from the younger group Iris and Elizabeth were the two children who manifested enthusiasm and capability to learn the Filipino words. It was observed that these two are the ones who are spoken to in Filipino by both parents (in the case of Iris) and by the mother (in the case of Elizabeth).

When asked if they would choose to pass on Filipino identity/culture to their children, both sets of parents agreed on the importance of doing so:

ER:           How are you going to address this issue?

Later part of the interview with Eric and Evangeline:

ER: If Elizabeth will grow up knowing that there are such things as your identity being a Filipino, do you see that as an advantage for her?

Eric: Probably from a vantage point that her mind or her horizons would be a little bit broader because she's from a diverse background instead of both parents being Americans. I know Evangeline will tell her all about the things that Evangeline did and all about the Philippines when she was growing up there. And I'll also share with her things that I did growing up in this country.

Evangeline: You know why it's not too hard for me to integrate?...Because he has an Italian background which is very close to the Filipino culture...like for instance, in terms of religion - Catholicism, and the close family ties.

Eric: Yes, we are also very close as a family.

On the other hand, it was observed that Gloria and Fred made no attempt to repeat words and phrases in Filipino. Their parents are making no conscious attempt to impart Filipino identity to their children and do not speak the Filipino language to the children.

Conversation with Gilberto and Grace:

ER: In terms of having a Filipino identity or having Filipino values and Filipino culture - do you see any need or any importance or any significance in bringing them up that way knowing that they are not only Americans because they are born here but that they also have this Filipino background?

Gilberto: You know...You know what's going to be hard though because even though we're both Filipinos - we both grew up here. I mean...I'm not saying we're Americans but we came here when we were still eleven years old - that's more than twenty years ago. But in terms...in terms of

upbringing, it could still be I guess, as strict because that's how we were brought up in the Philippines. You know, we're very disciplined.

Grace: Not only in the Philippines but even when we were growing up here...My grandfather, he was one of those people that was very strict and he was very old-fashioned...he had old-fashioned values.

Gilberto: In my family, you don't ever...ever raise your voice to your parents. You can't answer back nor reason out. In my family, my father wants to maintain that Filipino culture, especially when it comes to marriage. We have to marry someone with Filipino background.

During my conversation with Grace and Gilberto, I concluded that their attitudes toward raising their children with Filipino values were shaped largely by their own negative experiences of their upbringing in traditional homes. I sense that they want their children to have more freedom to define for themselves and pursue their goals.

Later part of the conversation:

Gilberto: In the upbringing of the children, I try to be more lenient - not like my parents. They were too demanding. But with the kids, when they hear me raise my voice, they know I mean business. But when it comes to knowing the culture, what do you do? They don't even know how to speak Tagalog (a Filipino dialect).

Grace: You see, when we were young, my father would talk to the neighbors in Kapampangan (another Filipino dialect) but he would never teach us. He wouldn't talk to us in his dialect. So I guess it's the same situation with our children. Sometimes, I talk to them in Tagalog and they look at me like I'm crazy. They look at me like - "What are you talking about, Mom?"

Gilberto: We don't speak to each other in Tagalog either so that's why.



Grace: You know what it is too? My mom and Gilberto's mom always talk to them in English. And my sitter talks to them in English.

Later part of the conversation:

ER: Have you guys gone home to the Philippines with the children?

Gilberto: Oh no, since we came here - we haven't been to the Philippines since 1971.

Grace: If I'd go home to the Philippines now, I'd probably be lost. Even if I tell you where I live, I wouldn't know how to get there.

As evidenced by the transcriptions of the conversations between me and the children mentioned above, one can surmise that sharing with them the Philippine folktale has enriched their expressive oral language. As per Glazer (1989), oral language is a vehicle for the development of writing and reading. It serves as a companion to the development of both. Oral language accompanies children's writing in the early years in drawing and painting activities as can be observed by the description of the development of Figures I, II, III, IV, and V done by the younger group of children. The way the older group of children talked about their painting was a lot more sophisticated which is developmentally appropriate. (See Figures XIII, XV, XVII, XVIII and XX.)

Glazer (1989) elaborates on the role of oral language, saying that associating language with interesting, exciting, and pleasant experience encourages children to talk. They will talk and talk when the environment where they live and play provides a real need to communicate, someone listens, and

there is a need to exchange language. Through writing or verbal expression, the children provided their reactions, and opinions and ideas about the story which I presented them and the characters involved. They wrote (through dictation for the younger group of children) and discussed what they would do or how they would feel in similar situations, describing and connecting their own experiences with those in the folktales.

For example, consider these remarks from my conversations with Gloria about the mudfish who will never get to go home because he got caught by the fisherman:

GG: What happened to that thing? (as she pointed at the picture of the mudfish).

ER: Oh, this is the fish who got lost. Do you remember what happened to him?

GG: Yeah - he died.

ER: Do you feel sad for him?

GG: No! (with a smirk on her face).

ER: Are you happy for the fisherman?

GG: I happy to kill the some fish.

ER: Oh really? The fisherman was happy. Why do you think the fisherman was happy?

GG: Because I got to caught some fish.

ER: That's right, he's going to have food for his family.

GG: And my daddy too! (Said it real loud with jubilation).

ER: Oh, daddy goes fishing?

GG: Yeah and then he eats...uuhm...fish.

Once again, from the transcriptions of the conversations

between me and the children that are mentioned above, one can observe the enthusiasm and excitement the children have to share their own stories and relate them with the story that they just heard. I believe the fact they each received my undivided attention and zest while we worked together contributed a lot to the positiveness of the whole experience of reading the folktale - for both the children and me. The fact that they were made aware of how the tape recorder works and that they could hear their own voice through it made them feel more important. The children were also encouraged to listen and share their own stories. Children when nurtured by a loving adult, and encouraged to tell their stories, thus increase oral language skills as well as build their self-confidence about using language to create stories.

Through reading and revisiting the folktale with the children, I introduced more new words to the children, thereby enriching their speech. As Chukovsky (1963) aptly puts it: "Since a child's mental growth is close connected with the growth of his vocabulary, it is easy to see how important this task is. In this sense, to teach a child to speak well means also to teach him to think well" (p. 729).

Pasamanick (1978), recognized the powerful impact a story can have on children: "Children are capable of both savoring the language of the literature and discovering and inferring its intent. Without using gimmicks, it challenges children to make thoughtful responses, gently stretching their minds and

expressive range - always shooting just slightly over their heads towards broader conceptualizations" (p. V). I agree as throughout my sessions with the children I observed their effort to make sense of the story and the delight they took in listening to and talking about the story.

#### D. To Preserve Cultural Identity

With the aid of the Philippine folktale, hopefully the children have reached some awareness that a certain aspect of their family background might be quite different from that of their friends and that they can take pride in their unique cultural identity. They have learned that there are such stories that come from the Philippines that can be as enjoyable (or even more) as the other tales they are more familiar with. These Philippine folktales might be stories that their parents have heard about when they were their age growing up in the Philippines. They have also learned more Filipino words which can be fun to learn to say as evidenced by the conversations with the children cited above.

Hopefully, awareness of their distinctive cultural ~~iden~~ identity will be valuable in developing empathy and tolerance with their friends who are different from them. This is also important in helping these children accept a wide range of differences in cultural practice.

As Anna commented when the elder of the farmers from the

mountain had called for a meeting between the hunters and the farmers: "The old man is right. They are all Filipinos even if they look different and speak different languages. I look different from my cousins but I know we are all Filipinos. Actually, we're called Filipino-Americans since we're born here."

When I heard Carlos verbalizing his process of deciding the skin color of the Filipinos in his painting, I asked him "How do you feel having that skin color? How about your friends?"

CC: I know my friends in school are different from me. In the group, we have Chinese, Indian, 2 white Americans, black American and myself, Filipino. We get along well. I see them as friends. I don't see their color when I play with them.

When Carlos shared with me that he goes to eat at his friend's house after play, I asked: "Do your friends eat rice too?"

CC: I go to my friend's house and I eat anything the mom gives us to eat. They find it funny when I tell them that at home, we eat rice in every meal including breakfast, but I know it doesn't bother them. I enjoy their food too. It's just at home, I'm used to eating rice. My mom cooks Filipino food well.

It is my hope that these children, experiencing a different culture at home, and as a result of their exposure to the folktales now more aware of their distinctive identity, would develop sensitivity to being an "other". Celebrating their being an "other" through sharing the Philippine folktale, they feel important and their self-concept blossoms.

Their differences are not being made invisible nor being ridiculed but respected and appreciated.

As Levine (1993) puts it: "Deriving mutual benefit from learning about diverse out-of-school experiences, each was expanding his or her 'communicative repertoire' in ways that has enormous potential for improving social life with multicultural society" (p. 19).

Through the celebration of the sharing of Philippine folktale, these children have gained fuller appreciation of and pride in the culture that their parents grow up with. Furthermore, the children are now starting to discover for themselves, and possibly take ownership of, their culture and identity.

After reading the legend of the rice to Carlos, he wanted very much to locate the Philippines on a map. He was so fascinated by the story that he asked me a question:

CC: Did this story really happen?

ER: Well, I can tell you one thing. There is a place called Banaue<sup>4</sup> in the northern part of the Philippines where Filipino farmers plant rice in magnificent terraces carved out of the mountain ranges centuries ago by a mountain tribe known as the Ifugaos. When I was in college, I climbed these terraces planted with rice. It was quite a marvelous sight. You know why it's called the Eighth Wonder of the World?

CC: Why? (as Carlos moved his body more towards me waiting for my response)

ER: Well, if you measure all the rice terraces end to end, it would encircle half of the globe or would be ten times the length of the Great Wall of China. Are you familiar with the Great Wall?

CC: Oh yeah. My goodness. I definitely would like to visit the rice terraces with my brother when we go to the Philippines someday. That's awesome.

When Dina was asked what she knows of the Philippines, she replied: "Well, I know it's very hot there. I know there's a lot of mosquitoes."

ER: Do you know there are beaches in the Philippines - white sand beaches?

DD: Oh, I love beaches. I would definitely want to travel there one day to go to the beaches and definitely to see the rice terraces. They seem so beautiful from how you described it. Do you have pictures of it?

ER: I'll bring you a postcard of it next time we see each other.

When Ben was asked about visiting the Philippines one day, he too replied positively:

BB: My cousins have been there several times. I definitely would like to see the cockfights. I also want to experience the blackout [routine power outages]. My aunt said she would play the piano when it's completely dark. She also plays spooky games to scare the children. It sounds like so much fun to me. I might get annoyed at the early morning crowing of the rooster as mentioned in the story. I like to wake up late in the morning when there's no school.

Anna was quite fascinated with the early crowing of the roosters: "I don't think they need alarm clocks in the Philippines. The roosters wake them up early."

I heard the children's enthusiasm and confidence as they said those Filipino words incorporated in the story. I noticed how their eyes sparkled and the big, sincere smiles in their faces as I told them that I wrote this story which I heard a long time ago from my grandfather when I was about their age.

When I said, "Your mom and your dad have probably heard this same story from their grandpas and grandmas when they were little children growing up in the Philippines", I felt the bodies of the younger children move as they were starting to relax and feel comfortable on my lap as I began reading the story.

The Philippine folktales I shared with the children reveal Filipino attitudes towards life and the value we attach to friendship and family which the children have definitely picked up on. In addition to the conversations mentioned above, I had the following conversation with Fred, who told a story about looking for a friend in response to hearing the snail story.

FF: I will look for my friend Robert in the mall. He got lost. He's four. (long pause...). I will ask Billy and Zack (as he started to draw the blue and black Power Rangers). Jason is the red ranger.

ER: Are they friends?

FF: Yes, they are all friends. We will look for Robert. (Then he continued to draw all the other characters as he continued to tell his story. He was paying attention to my hands as he dictated to me his story about the power rangers).

As can be observed from Figures VI, VII, and VIII, Fred's experience with Power Rangers is very much present in his process of making connections with the Philippine folktale read to him. The folktale has given him an opportunity to reason from his experiences with Power Rangers and has given him the chance to expand beyond Power Rangers the knowledge base from which he derives an understanding of how things



work. Gibson(1989) aptly describes such experiential learning as she cites Piaget: "The child's ability to reason from experience represents the heart of the learning process. It is this process that is responsible for the experimental mind and that, more than any other, sets the stage for a lifetime of learning. To intrude upon this process by providing explanations that the child has neither the experience nor the mental maturity to grasp is to distort a teaching/learning movement" (p. 7). Honoring Fred's attachment to the Power Rangers opened the door for him to reveal himself. Before this discussion, Fred's response to the story was limited to nods and one-word answers.

Dioko (1988) has succinctly described the same Filipino values that can be found in the Philippine folktale I read to the children: "The Visayan (referring to a major regional group in the Philippines) is a good neighbor. Towards the people of/in his immediate environ he was very much disposed to help. Whatever skills he had, he was willing to teach his friend and acquaintances in the barrio if only to help them in their struggle for survival...And when someone's life was in danger he would go out of his way to help the fellow" (p. 220).

Ben echoed Anna's satisfaction in the ability of the two groups of people to share their knowledge to help one another and prosper, when he commented: "It's great that the two groups were very helpful to each other even if they were total

strangers in the beginning. The hunters taught them how to prepare lechon (roasted pig) and the farmers taught them how to plant and cook rice."

Interestingly enough, after my first session with Anna, she told Ben during their following class the story that I told her about the rice. I understand they have been friends and classmates since kindergarten and their mothers are good friends. So at my next session with Anna, I met Ben's mother who was visiting Amanda. She volunteered her son to be part of the study saying: "Hey, Eleanor, I heard from Ben that you told Anna a very interesting Filipino story. If you need another child for your thesis, I'm sure Ben would like to be included." I guess the value of Filipinos being good neighbors and being generous is handed down to Anna!

When asked what he thinks about the farmers showing the hunters how to plant rice, Carlos responded: "It's great because now they don't need to move from one place to another. It must have been tough to move all the time to look for wild animals to eat."

Responding to the same question, Dina said: "It was great that the people from the mountain taught the hunters how to plant rice. This time they can build more permanent homes - maybe that made of rocks instead of tents."

Filipinos, according to Dioko, who concentrated his studies on the residents of the central region known as the Visayas, have traditionally had a strong commitment to their

community. "Adequately socialized, the Visayan was conscious of his responsibilities toward the sustenance of community life. He was aware that the interest of his group could be served best through cooperation and mass action. Thus, whenever his community was threatened by enemies outside, he was always willing to fight with the other members of the community to protect life and property. He was ready to die, if only to protect his home and village from the intrusion of evil men. A community, he believed, needed good leaders. And good leaders he respected, even honored, since without them his community could not prosper" (p. 221).

Carlos was quite intrigued by the elder of the group of farmers in the folktale: "The leader of the group is really something. He knows how to speak the two languages. That's how he became the interpreter. Everyone respects and listens to what he had to say."

Dioko emphasized the sociability of the Visayans and their fondness for lively gatherings: "For a Visayan, a good person was a companionable fellow. He valued friendship and abhorred the life of a loner or a recluse. The more friends he had, the happier he was. With friends, social gathering were more enjoyable. Here he would indulge in feasting, drinking, merry making, affairs which to him constituted elements of a good life" (p. 222).

Carlos, to describe further his painting (see Figure XVI) said "Well these two groups were having such a ball. See how

delicious the roasted pig looks. I'm going to call this pig John. The rice they shared must have been good too after the hunters were convinced that they were not worms. All the eating, drinking and dancing."

Perhaps, the reader can better understand these Filipino values if I introduce the original version of the retelling of this Philippine folktales, The Lonesome Snail and The Gift Of Rice.

# THE LONESOME SNAIL

*A Philippine Folktale*



*Eleanor A  
Rivera*

ILLUSTRATED BY AMICUS

THE LONESOME SNAIL

A Philippine Folktale

Retold by Eleanor A. Rivera

Illustrated by Amicus (How can I ever thank you!)

To my most precious love,

MICHELLE LOUISE

who will pass this on.

## The Lonesome Snail

---

Long, long time ago, shortly after Bathala made the world,  
different kinds of animals lived together like one happy  
family.



Among the animals who decided to live together were Dalag the mudfish, Tutubi the dragonfly, Putakti the wasp, and Kuhol the snail. They lived in a cozy little house by a tinkling brook. Around the house were vines and water plants that shaded them from the sun.

The four friends divided the housework among themselves, depending on what each could do best. Tutubi, Putakti, and Kuhol asked Dalag to be the head of the household.

"You are the biggest," they told the mudfish. "So you should be our leader and make the important decisions."

"All right," replied Dalag. "I will run the household and find



food for us to eat. But each of you must have a job to do. What would you like to be, Tutubi?"

The dragonfly fluttered his delicate wings and hummed, "I can be a messenger because I can fly the fastest."

"Good," said Dalag. "Now who will guard the house?"

"I will be the guard," buzzed the wasp. "My sting can poison anyone who tries to break in."

"Wonderful," said Dalag. "Now, Kuhol, what can you do for the household?"

"I'm too slow to run errands but I can be the cook. I can prepare scrumptious meals. I can also keep the house clean," answered Kuhol, nodding her little antennae.

The four friends did their best to make the household run smoothly. They worked well together. Dalag brought home tadpoles and vegetables, and Kuhol cooked tasty dishes three times a day.

Tutubi brought news about the weather. He told his friends when the sun would be out and when it would rain.

Putakti was a brave and watchful guard. Snakes could not come near the house for fear of getting stung. Putakti also repaired the house because he could carry bits of soil to patch the holes each time the roof leaked.

The four friends lived together harmoniously and were very happy.

Early one morning Dalag was swimming in the brook looking for food. Suddenly he spied something wriggling in the water. As he got closer, he saw a worm caught among the weeds.

"Here's lunch!" said Dalag.

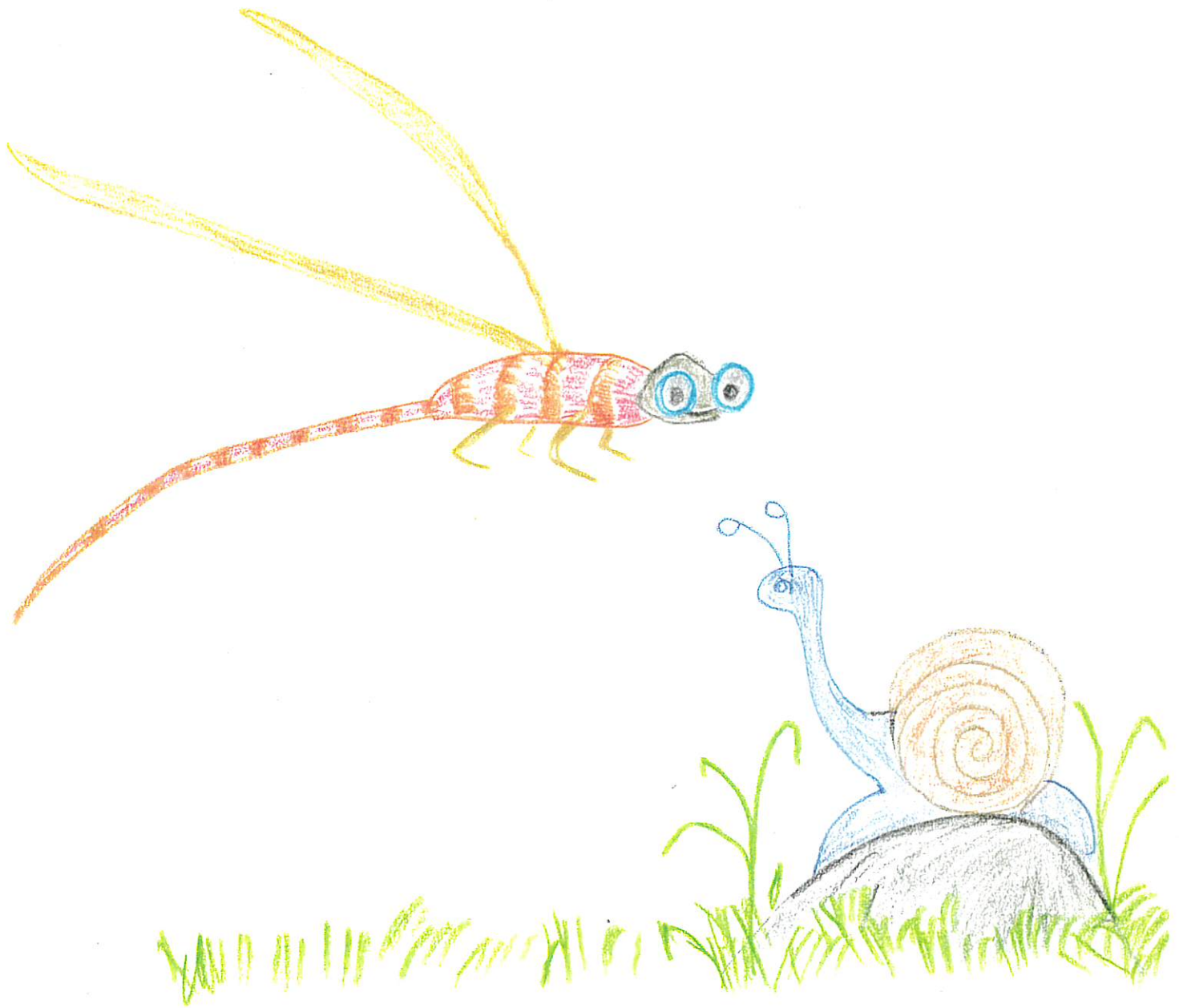
Without thinking twice, he seized the worm with his mouth and



began to swim home. Little did he know that there was a hook sticking out of the worms belly. The hook was tied to the end of the fishing line.

Dalag soon felt the hook piercing his own mouth. Aray, aray! He felt something pulling him to the surface of the water. Suddenly he couldn't swim anymore. He could only shake his body. He tried to spit out the worm but the hook held fast. Before he knew it, a fisherman had caught him and put him in the basket. Then he brought the mudfish home. Dalag was never heard from again.

Tutubi, Putakti, and Kuhol waited all day for Dalag to come home. He had never been late before. They were hungry and worried.



The next day Tutubi told his friends, "Let me go look for Dalag."

"Please take good care," said Kuhol.

The dragonfly flew off, hum, hum hum, to search for Dalag. He flew to the rice paddies but there was no sign of the missing mudfish. He hovered over the brook, looking into the water to see if his friend was swimming among other fishes.

Then he saw a fish named Tilapia, whose lips moved in a strange way when his head was out of the water. "Glub, glub," Tilapia seemed to be saying with his funny lips.

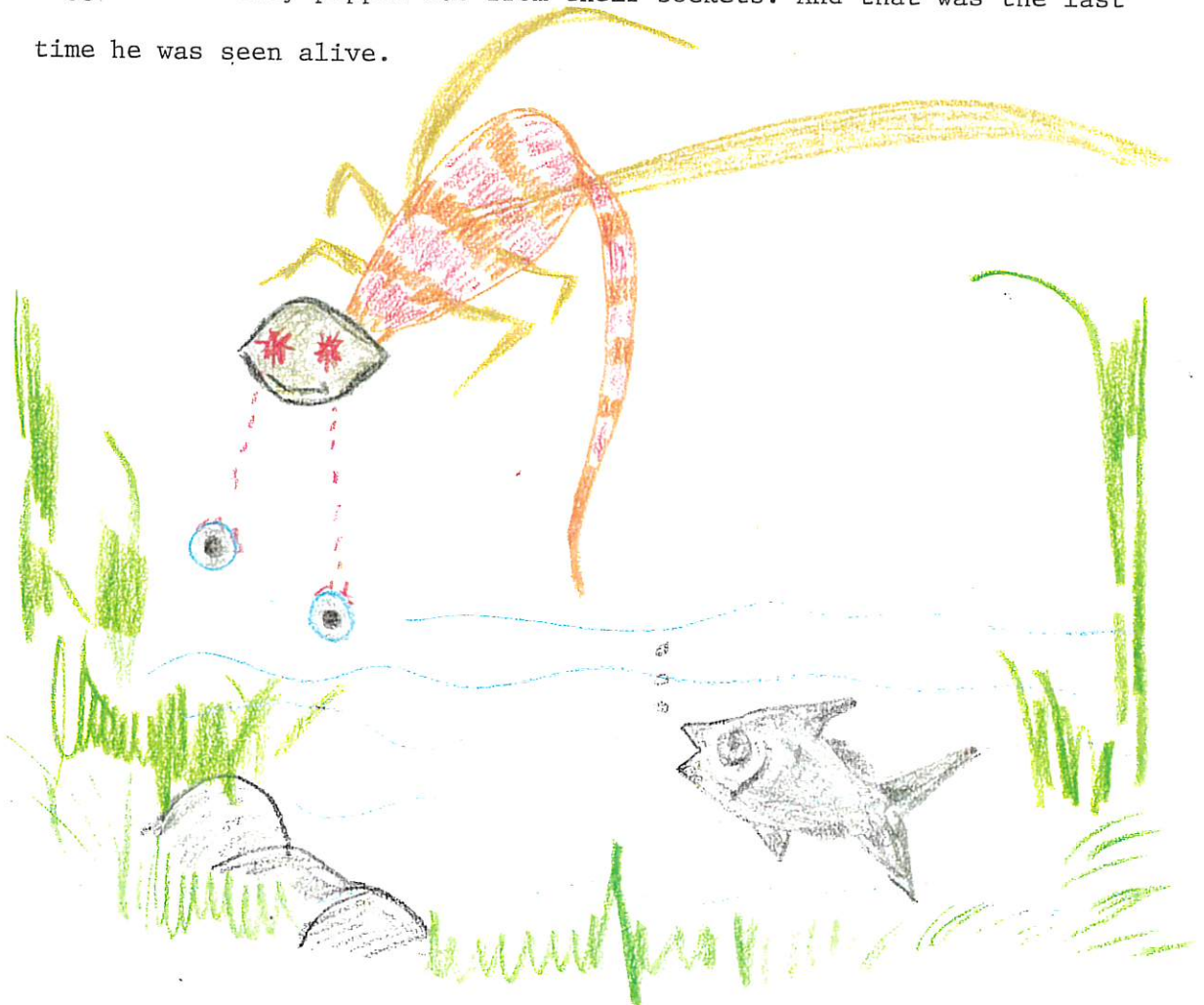
Tutubi thought Tilapia was laughing at him. "Why are you laughing?" asked Tutubi. "Are my eyes too big?"

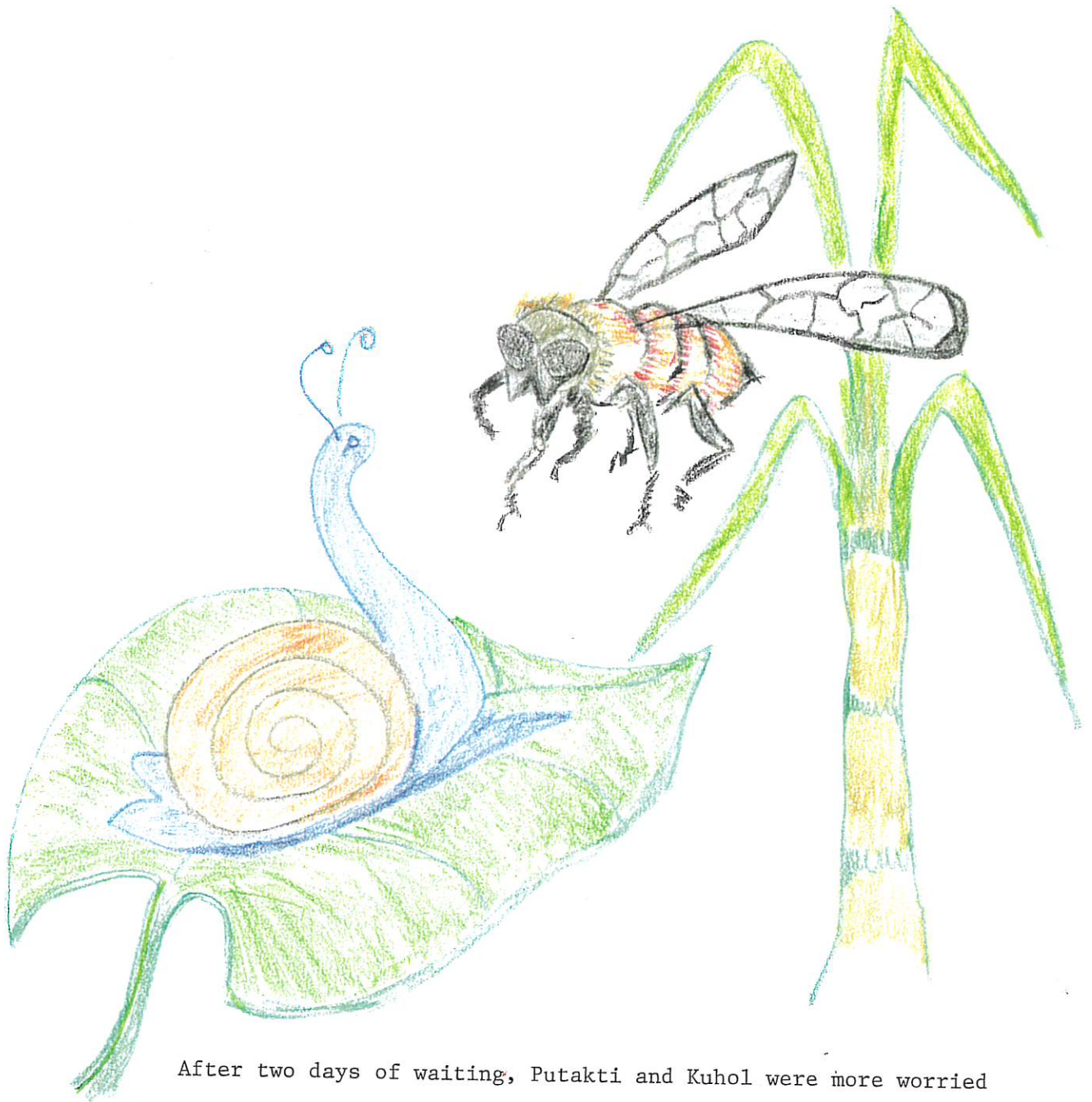
"Glub, glub," went Tilapia's lips.

"Zzzit-zit, stop laughing at my eyes," warned Tutubi, "or I shall call Putakti to sting you."

But Tilapia continued to say, "Glub, glub."

Tutubi grew angrier and angrier and his eyes grew bigger and bigger until they popped out from their sockets. And that was the last time he was seen alive.





After two days of waiting, Putakti and Kuhol were more worried than ever. They were also very hungry, for even if Kuhol knew how to cook, there was no food in the kitchen. Luckily for Kuhol, she could eat little mud while waiting for better food. Putakti, however, could only tighten his belt so he wouldn't feel hunger pangs.

"I'd better go find Dalag and Tutubi," said Putakti on the third day.

"Please come back as soon as you can. I hope you'll find them soon," said Kuhol.

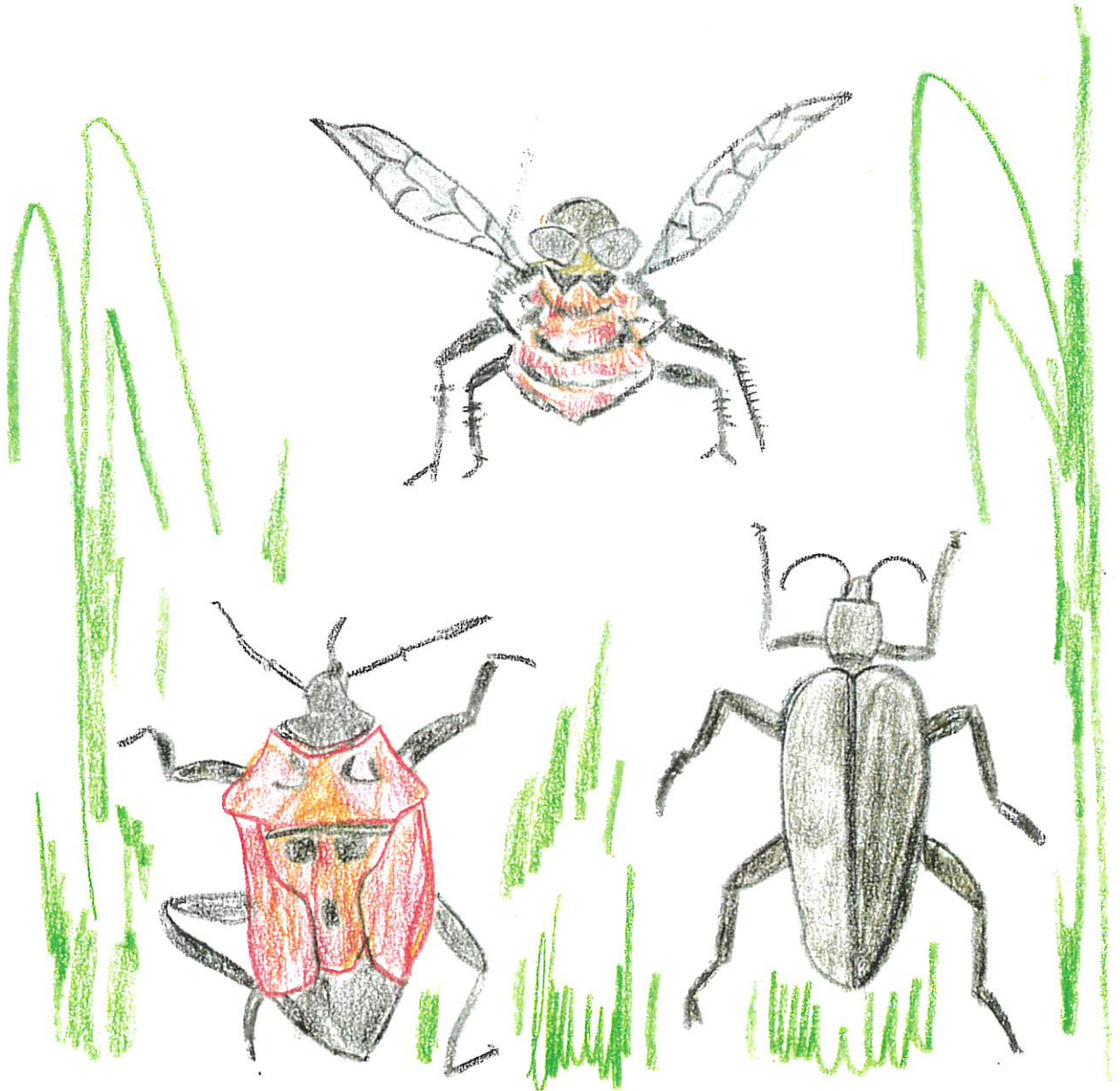
So Putakti flew out, buzz, buzz, in search of his two friends.

"Dalag! Tutubi!" he called out.

Salagubang, the beetle and Salaginto, the goldbug came out of their homes as soon as they heard the wasp buzzing.

"Have you seen Dalag and Tutubi?" he asked.

Salagubang answered, "We saw Tutubi the other day. He was talking to Tilapia in the brook."





Putakti buzzed his way towards the brook. He felt sure he would come upon Dalag and Tutubi on their way home.

But Putakti got hungrier and hungrier as he flew, and his tummy got thinner and thinner. He kept tightening his belt to stop the hunger pangs. At last he tightened it so hard that his body broke in two. That was the end of Putakti.

Kuhol was now all alone in the house. After a week, she was so lonely that she could not stand it any longer. She began to weep, "Waa-laa, waa-laa." Then she set out to find her friends.

Kuhol asked Palaka the frog, Butiki the lizard, and Daga the mouse to help her but they only looked puzzled. She searched among the bushes and the water lilies. She wandered in the rice fields and the sugarcane fields. At night Alitaptap the firefly tried to help by lighting the way.





Whenever Kuhol saw a blade of grass, she would climb to the top and look as far as she could see. Her little antennae would point back and forth, left and right, up and down. Swaying with the grass, she would weep softly, "Waa-laa, waa-laa."

Even today you can still see Kuhol creeping up shades of grass and stems of plants, sobbing and searching for her friends.



## ***THE GIFT OF RICE - A FILIPINO FOLK TALE***

This story is based upon an ancient Filipino legend which tells how the people of the Philippines, called Filipinos, were first introduced to rice, and how it became an important food that Filipinos eat every day.

This story takes place in the Philippines, a country far from where we are now. It is located across the Pacific Ocean in Asia, composed of more than 7,000 islands, some of which are very large and inhabited by people, and some of which are very small and not inhabited at all. The climate is extremely warm and has two basic seasons, the hot season and the rainy season. This kind of climate is ideal for many exotic types of animals, birds and trees. Delicious fruits grow abundantly on mango, coconut, guava and banana trees which may be found throughout the Philippine Islands. "*Kalabaw*" (water buffalo), "*kambing*" (goat), and "*baboy*" (pig) are just some of the many animals which make their home in the Philippines, and, of course, the early morning crowing of a "*tandang*" (rooster)- a sound every Filipino is well acquainted with.

According to the legend, the early Filipinos of the Philippine Islands lived together in communities which were known as "*barangay*". Each barangay had about 30 to 100 families. The people of the barangay got their food by hunting the wild animals of the forests and mountains, fishing in the lakes and sea, and gathering fruits from the trees. The people would pray often to their god called Bathala to give them enough food for everyone. But as the animals, fish, and fruits became scarce in one area, the barangay would have to move to a new place to find more food.

During one such journey in search for food, the people of the barangay came upon a mountain which seemed to hold a promise of good hunting. The barangay elder selected the best hunters to search for birds and other wild animals. After offering a prayer to Bathala one early morning, he sent off the hunting group while the others remained behind to look for fruits and vegetables to gather.

The hunters were hopeful, and climbed the side of the mountain with determination. They need to find some animals to take back to the barangay or their families would be hungry and disappointed.

As the morning turned into afternoon, the hot sun beat down upon the group of hunters, and they began to grow weary and tired. They decided to rest under the shade of a bamboo grove. As they entered the cool shade of the bamboo grove they came upon a gathering of people who looked quite different from themselves.

These people were much shorter, with golden brown skin, and beautiful long black hair with curly ringlets. The hunters had never met such people before. Whispering among themselves they came to the conclusion that these people were the "*engkantos*", the little people of the mountains with magical powers of whom they had heard so many stories

from the barangay elders. The hunters were excited, for perhaps the engkantos would use their enchanted abilities to help them find food.

The engkantos seemed to be friendly as they waved for the hunters to join them, but the two groups quickly discovered that they spoke different languages. They were unable to understand each other. Suddenly, a very old and very wise looking engkanto stepped forward. Everyone was silent as the elder engkanto began to speak. "We are going to have a feast. Please join us."

The hunters were amazed, for the elderly engkanto had spoken to them in their own language. The hunters understood what he had said. A young girl from the hunting party was the first to speak. She looked up at her father with sparkles in her eyes saying, "Father, surely this engkanto has very magical powers."

The elderly engkanto heard the statement of the young girl, and his wise old weathered face melted into a smile. "We are not engkantos", he softly replied. The old man asked everyone to gather around and be seated. Once everyone became comfortable, he continued.

"We certainly look different from you, this is true." Everyone nodded in agreement. "There is no doubt that we speak different languages." By now the two groups were attentively listening to every word. "However, the most important truth of all is what I will say to you now." The entire group stood still and waited for what he had to say. The old man very solemnly declared, "In spite of all our differences, we are all Filipinos of the Philippine Islands."

Everybody thought for a moment about what they had just heard. They all began to smile and laugh, for they had to agree that this was very, very true. They were indeed all from the Philippines, and that certainly made them all Filipinos.

"Now let us prepare for the feast", exclaimed the old man. Everybody stood up, and together, side by side, the hunters from the valley and the people of the mountain began the preparations for the feast.

One of the hunters showed the mountain people how to prepare a wild pig to be roasted upon a large bamboo pole over an open fire. The hunter explained that this was called "*inasal*". The inasal was a very popular food at all the important feasts in the valley. The mountain people tasted the inasal and were very pleased. Another hunter demonstrated the proper way of cleaning, splitting and drying a fish over a smoky fire to produce a dish called "*buwad*". The mountain people cried with delight upon tasting the buwad.

In turn, one of the mountain people chopped down a long pole of bamboo, cutting it into one foot sections which were hollow in the center. He poured water into the bamboo containers, and then added what looked to the hunters like pearl white grains of pebbles. The hunters were extremely interested, and watched with amazement as the bamboo container was placed over the fire to cook. When it was ready the contents of the

container were emptied onto a banana leaf. It was presented to the hunters who stared in disbelief at the mound of white particles in the center of the banana leaf.

The uneasy group of hunters whispered among themselves, not quite knowing what to do. "Is anything wrong?" the old man of the mountain inquired. The hunters looked at each other and an awkward silence fell over the group.

"Excuse me, we do not mean to offend you or appear rude," the young girl from the hunting party broke the silence. "It is just that we people of the valley are not used to eating white worms."

The elderly mountain man translated what had been said to his people, and they all started laughing and shook their heads. The old man explained to the hunters. "We people of the mountains do not eat white worms either. What we have prepared for you is a grain which we call "*palay*". It is grown here in the mountains. We guarantee that you will like palay. Taste it and if you do not like it, you can take away all our jewelry and other valuables." The hunters figured that they could not lose. Everybody began to eat, and the palay was served with roasted meat, smoked fish, steamed vegetables and fresh fruits. The hunters were astonished at how delicious the palay tasted. They were in such awe at the energy it provided them.

It was a memorable feast that lasted a whole day and a whole night. There was much laughter and singing and dancing. The hunters taught the mountain people how to hunt the wild animals of the forests, how to catch the fish in the sea, and how to pick the fruit from the trees of the valley when the fruit was just ripe. In return the mountain people taught the hunters how to plant, harvest and cook palay.

"If you plant and care for palay, you will always have a plenty of food." said the elderly mountain man. The people of the valley were filled with gratitude for being given the gift of palay for they realized that this would change their lives forever. "Now we will not have to move every time the animals, fish and fruit become scarce. Now we will have permanent homes." The people of the valley were overjoyed.

Gradually the gift of palay spread throughout all the islands of the Philippines. Today you can find palay served with meals in the home of every Filipino.

Do you know what this pearly white grainy food called palay is?

***IT IS RICE!***

Note: I made adaptations as I gained experience in telling this story to the children. One major aspect of the folktale I used for the younger group of children that I would like to change is the title. I realize that the ideal way to prepare a child in introducing any book is to briefly show the cover, and then tell the child the title and the name of the author and illustrator. I noticed after the fourth time I was reading the story to the children that unconsciously, I was skipping the title of the story - The Lonesome Snail. Looking back, I guess there was something in the title that bothered me. The title seems to attach some value judgment to it - being lonesome. I would like to change the title to Why The Snail Looks Around, a title which is value-free and has more of an element of a folktale, a story of how a phenomenon came into being. It does not color the story and set a tone for the children to be empathetic and concentrate on how the snail became lonesome. This new title instead keeps them in suspense and allows them to pay more attention to the various twists and turns of the story. The title would start to build their interest in solving a mystery and hopefully would sustain their curiosity enough to stay with the story and find the reason why, towards the end of the story.

Another aspect that I would like to alter in this story would be the names of characters. To begin with, for a child who is not familiar with the Filipino words, it would help if the individual words would have a rhyming pattern, like for

example Keyhole the Kuhol (for the snail), Clangbang the Salagubang (for the beetle), Bambi the Tutubi (for the dragonfly), Humbug the Dalag (for the mudfish). In the rhyme repetitions, the three year olds are examining and practicing the sound pattern of the language. Sound is the sensory aspect of speech. It is the tangible attribute of the system that children love to manipulate as they explore the musicality of their language (Gibson, 1989).

#### IV. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

I would now like to consider the issue of subjectivity which must be addressed in any qualitative inquiry. As I read and reread my field-notes and interview transcriptions, I became uncomfortably aware of the fact that those words had become the reality from which the interpretive account would be extracted. The children and their parents' reality had been filtered through those words. This research is apparently about the children and the parents, and yet, as soon as I made decisions about what words to use in this story, this also became a story about me. The things that I think are important became the focus of what I saw as important in their lives.

I am a believer in teaching practices that celebrate a multicultural, rather than an assimilative, perspective, and I recognize that my outlook might have shaped my observations. As a parent, I make a conscious effort to integrate the

Filipino culture in the way I raise my child. I believe it is significant for her to be aware of and to embrace her Filipino identity. Therefore I am very conscious that I might have swayed the children and the parents' responses with my own biases.

It was a wonderful experience to exchange stories, viewpoints, dreams and ideals with the parents. I feel privileged by the depth that the parents allowed me to probe into their lives. This project provided me an opportunity to really get to know and build friendships with these parents.

During the conversations we shared on parenthood we often delved into issues I had confronted privately but now felt comfortable enough to discuss. While it was somewhat reassuring to share concerns, like that time when I agreed with Ignacio and Irene about how important it is to give our children the best education we possibly can, seeing how they interacted with Iris, particularly witnessing how controlling in a very loving way they were and how they covertly pressured and pushed her to achieve, I actually saw myself in them and it scared me. I hope and pray that I have mellowed by now - now that my child is nearing her pubescent period, which makes matters more complicated. Anyway, these observations were very apparent in Figures IX and X, both Iris's drawings of the snail. In Figure IX, Iris's mother was telling her exactly which colors to use in which part of the snail that Iris drew. Figure X was a drawing Iris did outside of my meeting with her

at home. The first words that came out of Irene's mouth when she handed me her daughter's drawing was: "I told her to be careful with coloring and yet she had some lines out of the boundaries of the snail's body." If we would compare Figures IX and X with Elizabeth's Figure V, there is a huge difference. Elizabeth's parents were the ones who expressed that the most that they can do is to give her love and guidance. They will always keep in mind to respect her individuality. In sharp contrast, Ignacio and Irene stressed that until Iris turns twenty one, she will never date unchaperoned and that is not negotiable.

The values of Ignacio and Irene are clearly expressed in Dioko's study on Philippine family values, particularly his findings on how protective parents are: "Parents protect their children from harm. Being inexperienced, children could be susceptible to threats from dangerous elements. To protect them from these elements is the responsibility of parents. One result of this tendency is over-protectiveness on the part of the parents. Thus, Visayan parents watch over their children closely while they are still very young. Climbing a stairway or trees, venturing alone farther from home, even going to school unaccompanied - these Visayan parents would not allow for very young children" (p. 51).

"Children obey the command of their parents or elders. This norm of conduct required that the words of one's elders were to be taken seriously. Young people must heed such words,



otherwise they would find themselves in difficult situations. It was not necessary nor appropriate for the latter to figure out whether the command of their elders was reasonable or not. Their opinion was not important. What was important was who said it" (p. 55).

"The Visayan was a family man. He was aware of the importance of the family as a social unit...So deep was his concern over the welfare of his offspring that he would insist that he be consulted before they did something important. He felt this was necessary to protect the children from dangerous and harmful situations" (p. 218).

As Cayetano, Carlos' father puts it: "I don't require my children to work while going to school. Their only job is to finish college. That is how Catherine and I measure our success as parents - being able to let all our four children finish college. After that, we can go home and retire in the Philippines...I keep reminding them that they have to strive harder than the rest because of the color of their skin. Let's face it - they don't make it in life simply because they are smart. If others do a mile, they have to do three miles...They know that they are Filipino-Americans and they are proud of it!"

The last words in The Wizard of Oz are Dorothy's words: "There's no place like home". That ending has been criticized as being too sentimental and corny. I thought it was a brilliant, ironic ending. I believe Dorothy is saying,

"However faulty these people are in my family, this is all I've got". This whole process of doing the research was so poignant and so dear to me. It brought me home. My conversations with the parents and my storytelling with the children, hearing their reactions and witnessing how the stories have transformed them affirmed my strong belief that home is really where the heart is.

Home can be anywhere as long as I know who I am, what I am all about. This endeavor has become my way of providing a vehicle for letting children discover a part of who they are. In the process, I hope to have touched them in a way which enables them to take pride in who they are, their heritage and their roots. As their identity starts to grow, hopefully they would feel love and support by the significant people in their lives, in their homes.

As for me, in the 15 years I have lived in this country, I have never really felt at home; never really gained a sense of belonging. It was such a struggle not knowing when and where to anchor myself being in a foreign land knowing that my home was so far away from me. I was always looking forward to the day when I would return to my homeland, the Philippines. But being here really made me very much appreciate what I am all about and who I have become because of my Filipino heritage. The rich and beautiful past that has its share of trials and tribulations, but which I proudly can call mine, has molded me into who I am now. Only with this discovery did

I become courageous and confident enough to venture into opening my real self to someone.

It was not until I felt love and acceptance from this person that I finally "found my place in the sun". I am finally home, even being away from the Philippines. This person who loves me is interested in who I am, what I am all about, my culture, my past, my dreams and aspirations for the future. He is interested in knowing the first twenty years of my life before I came to this country to understand me better.

In the process, I have learned to look deeper into my identity. Sharing my culture, background and identity with him has made me appreciate how rich and beautiful my country, the Philippines, is; and how proud I am of it.

Although we two are from different cultural backgrounds and of different races, we do not just tolerate these facts, but most of all, accept, celebrate and rejoice in our differences. We are truly fascinated by the discoveries of how different from and yet so similar we are to each other. Life has so much to offer us as we have learned to love and respect who we really are - accepting and loving everything about us including the past; even the times when it was difficult to handle and accept some of the truths about our past. Somehow I know I have found my soulmate when I experience this person who takes me for who I really am because in the process I have learned to accept everything about me.

Somehow I know I am home wherever life will take me. I am

home because I have discovered and accepted and celebrated who I am and know that I have something worthwhile to offer to this person whom I have learned to love and accept for who he truly is.

As I focused myself in the process of interacting and experiencing the parents and the children in the study, I would find myself humming the song "Home" which I learned when I was around seventeen years old. Little did I know that it would take me back to The Wizard of Oz. I just recently found out that "Home" was the theme song of the Broadway version of The Wizard of Oz, called The Wiz. I would like to share the lyrics with you to let you know exactly why during the whole process of discovering how folktales could be relevant to the children in my study, this song also became an affirmation of my journey in my search of home:

"Home"

When I think of home  
I think of a place  
Where there is love overflowing  
I wish I was home  
I wish I was back there  
With the things I've been knowing

Wind that makes the tall trees bend into leaning  
Suddenly the snowflakes' fall has a meaning  
Sprinkling the sea  
Makes it all clear

Maybe there is a chance  
For me to go back  
Now that I have some direction  
It would sure be nice to be back home  
Where there is love and affection

And just maybe I can convince time to slow up  
Giving me enough time in my life to grow up  
Time be my friend  
Let me start again

Suddenly my world's going to change its pace  
But I still know where I'm going  
I have had my mind spun around in space  
And yet I watched it growing

Oh, if you're listening God  
Please don't make it hard to know  
If we should believe the things that we see  
Should we run away  
Should we try and stay  
Or would it be better just to let things be

Living here in this brand new world  
Might be a fantasy  
But it taught me to love  
So it's real  
Real to me

And I've learned that we must look  
inside our hearts  
To find a world full of love  
Like yours, like mine  
Like home

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has provided field-based accounts of how the Philippine folktales (and folklore in general) can be an essential aspect in the educational process of young children. The folktales are food for the children's souls and minds. Their truths are both universal and culturally specific. When a child hears the right story at the right time, he/she is given a gift for a lifetime. The Philippine folktales give children an enduring gift that will enable them to grow and mature and utilize their imagination to be caring and compassionate human beings.

Having observed the awakening of the children through the process of acquainting themselves with Philippine folktales, I can conclude that they value this initial introduction of the Filipino people/culture which they are a part of; the story became a potent vehicle for knowing their roots. Being awakened, they can pay attention to the beauty and richness of our own Filipino heritage and thus gain fuller appreciation of and pride in sharing their uniqueness with other children; and hopefully become more tolerant, accepting and respecting of individual differences.

As Damiana (1976) beautifully puts it: "It is generally accepted that to really know a people, one should know its literature, for literature is the spiritual record of a nation. The literature of a people expresses the people's

values and ideals, their hopes and fears, their aspirations and frustrations - in short, their collective soul. Applied to the Philippine situation, this means that to know ourselves, really and completely as Filipino, we should know our literature, by which, I mean of the various regions or linguistic groups that comprise the country" (p. 56).

The finding of this study is not proposed to be all inclusive due to the limited time spent on the study, the small number of children worked with and the use of only two Philippine folktales for the study for the two age groups of children studied: Rather, it is intended as a seminal study that can lay the groundwork for further research to explore the use of Philippine folktale on young children.

With the extensive search I have done on studies utilizing folktales in early childhood education, I have not come across any such research addressing this younger age group of children (i.e. ages three to five). This is evident in the very limited source I have of Philippine folktales written for children of this age group.

Future research should utilize a variety of Philippine folktales and possibly other forms of folklore such as proverbs, street chants, clapping games, etc. to examine their relevance on the learning process of young children.

For the younger group of children, to motivate them to express their own thoughts, feelings and insights about the story that was read to them, I originally planned to have them

utilize media other than crayon and dictated writing such as tempera paint, collage and playdough/clay. Perhaps it was partly because these children were very much at ease with the use of crayon aside from expressing themselves verbally; and partly because I wanted to take the easier route due to time constraints so that I really did not invest a lot of time and energy in letting them express their thoughts and feelings on the story through other media. Future research should examine how this group of children utilize tempera, paint, collage, playdough, clay; perhaps through blocks and dramatic play "to express more fully, more accurately, even more subtly, the ideas and emotions that fill their young minds" (Pasamanick, 1978, p. VI).

I would recommend encouraging the older group of children to utilize the other media mentioned above besides tempera paint and oral/written language to express their thoughts, feelings and insights about the tale told to them.

I would further recommend to bring the members of each group of children together to read the Philippine folktale and examine how they can work collaboratively to express themselves. It would be valuable to observe how they bring in whatever knowledge and experience they have with the story after it was read to them on a one-to-one basis and how they can work in collaboration with and teach each other. Perhaps, through bringing them together, they will not only develop a



sense of solidarity but also learn, exhibit, develop tolerance, acceptance and appreciation of each other's differences; knowing how diverse they are in spite of their common link of having a Filipino heritage.

I found a direct correlation between the parents' attitudes in imparting awareness of Philippine culture, values and traditions with how their children express their reaction to the Philippine folktale presented to them. This link is apparent in the children's comparative ease and enthusiasm in repeating the actual Filipino words and phrases incorporated into the story. The two children whose parents are making a concerted effort to introduce the Philippine culture and language and value more highly their children's awareness of their Filipino heritage, were the ones who had fun and a sense of ownership in saying those Filipino words and phrases. The children whose parents are not making a conscious effort to preserve the Filipino cultural identity in their household did not pick up on the Filipino words and phrases and would not attempt to even if prompted.

One mother who is not making a concerted attempt to promote Filipino identity, nonetheless asked me where she can get hold of stories like the one I read after observing the interaction I had with her child in reading the folktale. She expressed regret at having no access to Philippine literature. This study did not bring to the surface how these findings can be looped back to the parents. All of the parents have shown

interest in acquiring more materials in Filipino to read to their children. Further research should examine the value of having the parents share Philippine folktales with their children. Perhaps, they can also be encouraged to tell their children the stories that they were told growing up in the Philippines. Would not this be passing of oral tradition in action?

In conclusion, it is hoped that this study has enhanced the reader's understanding of the relevance of Philippine folktales (and folklore in general) in the learning process and development of children between ages three to ten years old. Hopefully, teachers will see the value of incorporating Philippine folktales in their curriculum and be supportive of the viability of a multicultural perspective that is infused throughout the curriculum. Maybe, teachers would look at a Filipino child in their classroom through an unaccustomed lens, want to learn more about the cultural experiences of all of their students and demonstrate that they value the contribution of all to the work of the classroom. Teachers can perhaps start to celebrate the differences of the children, and not make them invisible.

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## NOTES

1. While many of the authors cited refer specifically to fairy tales, I believe their remarks also apply to folktales in general. Fairy tales are one form of folktale. Professor Salud Parayno (1991) explains, "The term folktale refers to a traditional narrative of unknown authorship that has been handed down from generation to generation regardless of its content. These old stories are often called fairy tales because many of them deal with fairies or magic or any supernatural element." (p. 49) She adds that whether or not the tales have fairies and magic they have similar effects on their audience: "The distinction between old folktales and modern fairy tales or fanciful tales is immaterial to the child." (p. 89)

2. Dean Fansler was an American scholar and folklorist who collected and edited with comparative notes 4,000 folktales in the Philippines. Filipino Popular Tales. 1921. Lancaster, PA and New York: The American Folklore Society.

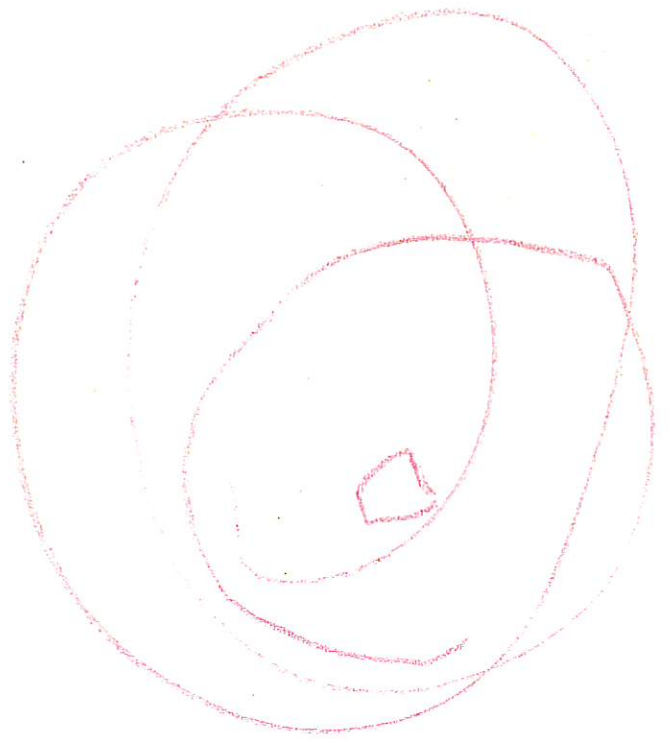
3. Thanks to Eladio Dioko who provided me a copy of his Ph.D. dissertation. He is now the Director of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports, Region VII of the Philippines.

4. The Banaue Rice Terraces are located deep in the Cordillera Mountains in northern Luzon.

**APPENDIX: FIGURES I-XX**

Figure 1

The eye of dragonfly  
that got bigger.



Hell drink honey. The bee got thirsty.  
I dont like him to get  
hungry. I will not  
let him pieces. I will  
give him food.

The bee can't get hungry  
He's going to get, he's not gonna  
stop hungry and he can't break.

He's going to drink a honey.  
He can drink it in a cup. That's  
his favorite, right.

The bee got not hungry.  
The bee  
cut like a knife. The bee will turn  
into pieces.



Figure III



If the eyes dont get bigger  
So the eyes wont fall down

It dont get bigger

If you dont get angry then  
Your eyes wont pop anymore

Figure IV



Figure V



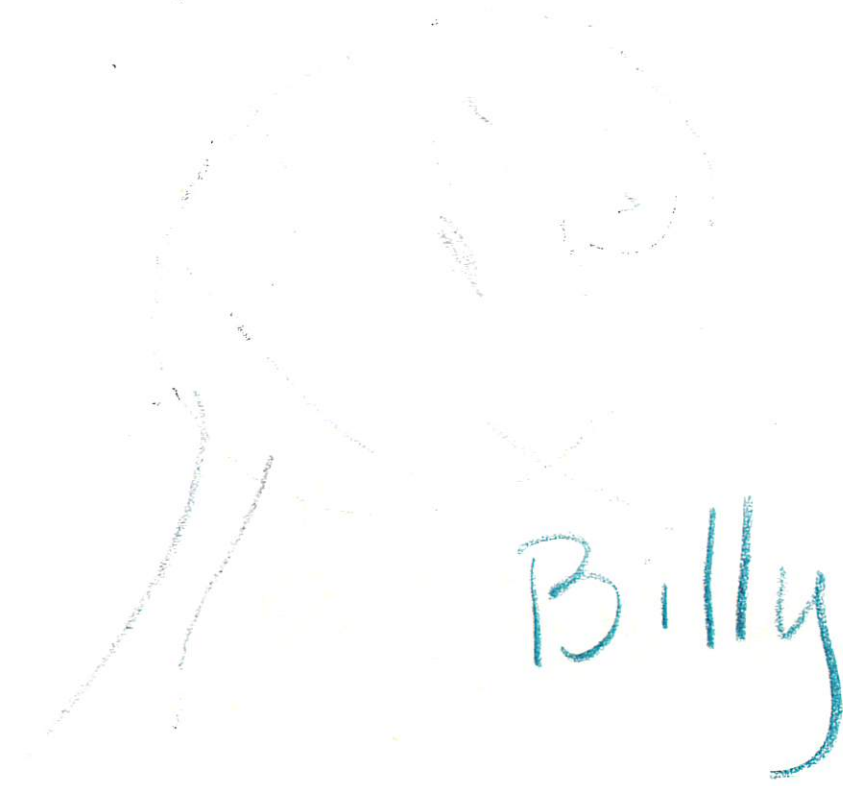
Snail (Kuh)

Bee (Putaker)

Fish (Dabag)

Dragonfly (Tutubi)

Figure VI

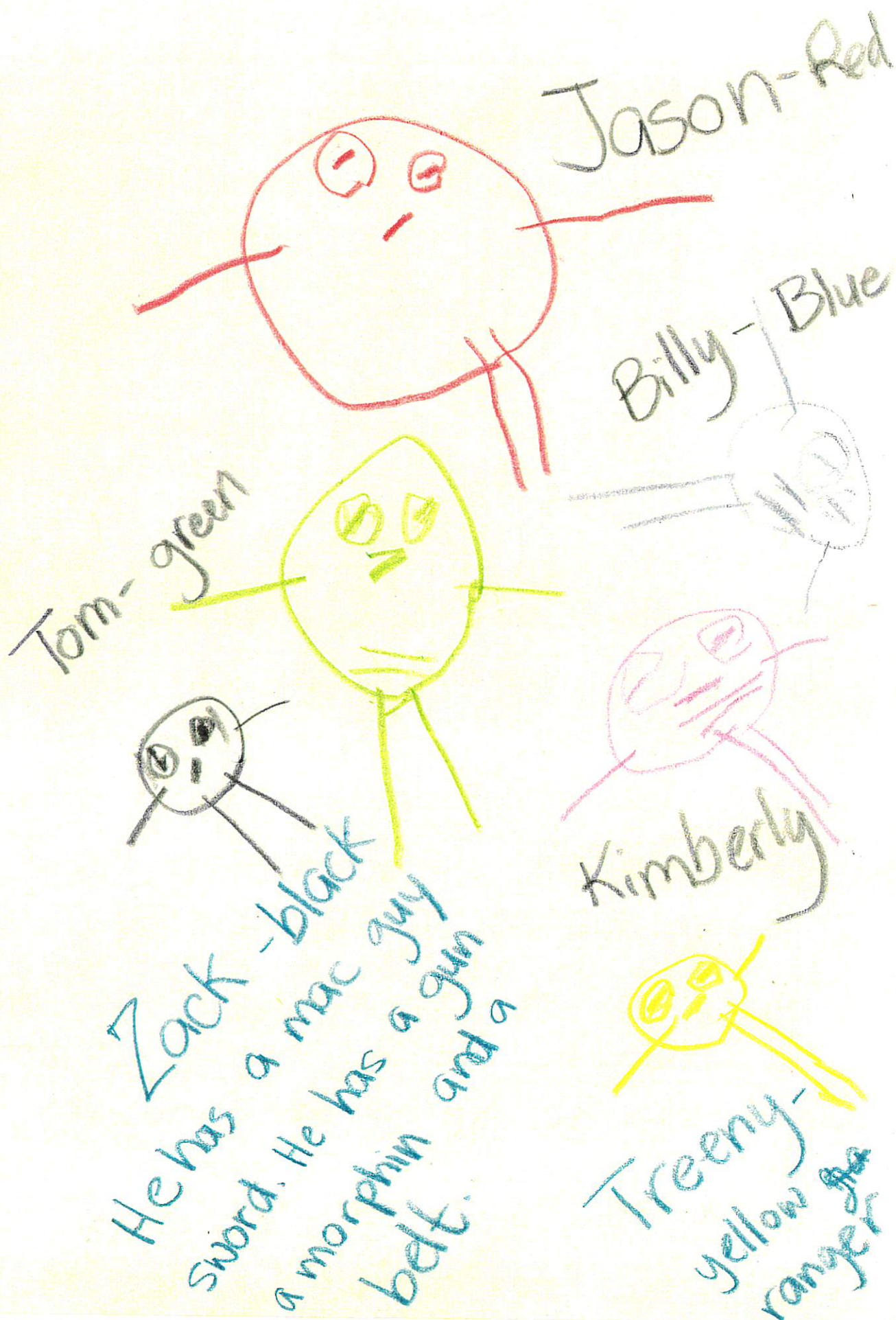


I will my friends  
I will for my friends in the  
mall. I will look for my  
my friend Robert. He is 4.

Trenie has 2 tiger  
sword and Jason has a  
sword and Zack a mat  
guy sword and a gun.

Tommy, the white  
and the green has a sword  
Tommy has a sword and  
a tail. The tail goes  
up.

Figure VII



He has a mac juy  
 sword. He has a gun  
 a morphin and a  
 belt.

Figure IX



Figure X





Figure XI

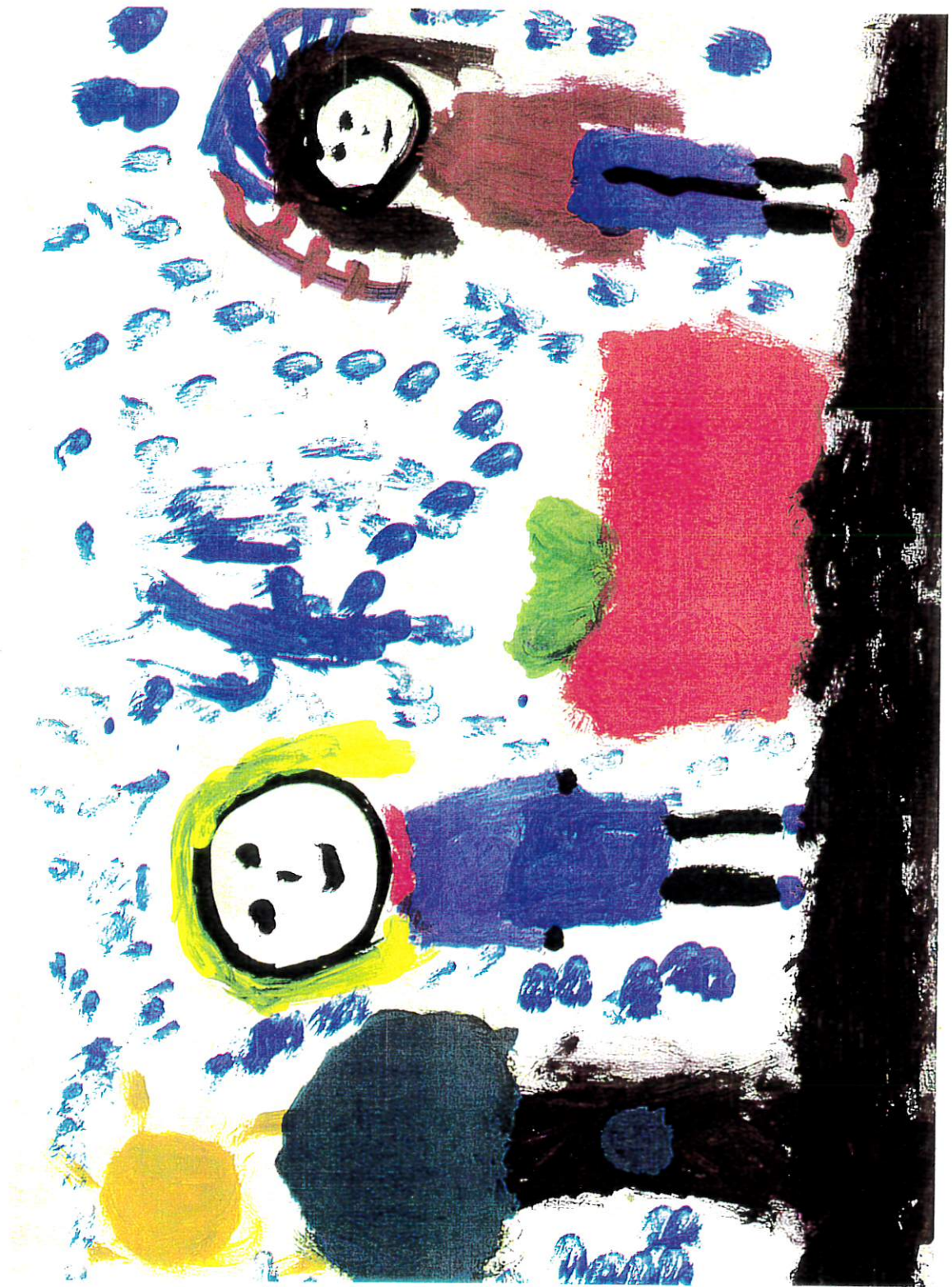


Figure XII



Figure XIII

Sun - the sun tired the hunters

Tree - the hunters sat under the tree  
to rest

Rice - the food crop

Girl - said we don't eat white worms

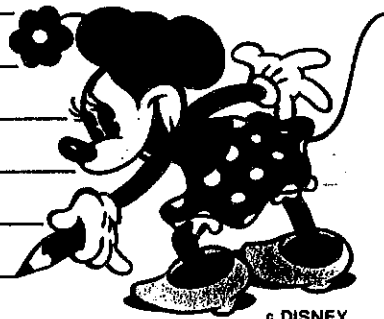
Old Man - translator of the valley  
and mountain people

Enkantos - fairies / people from the  
mountains

Barangay - hunters / people from the  
valley

Paldy - rice before it's cooked

Ba-mona leaves - served as plates for  
food.



© DISNEY

Figure XIV

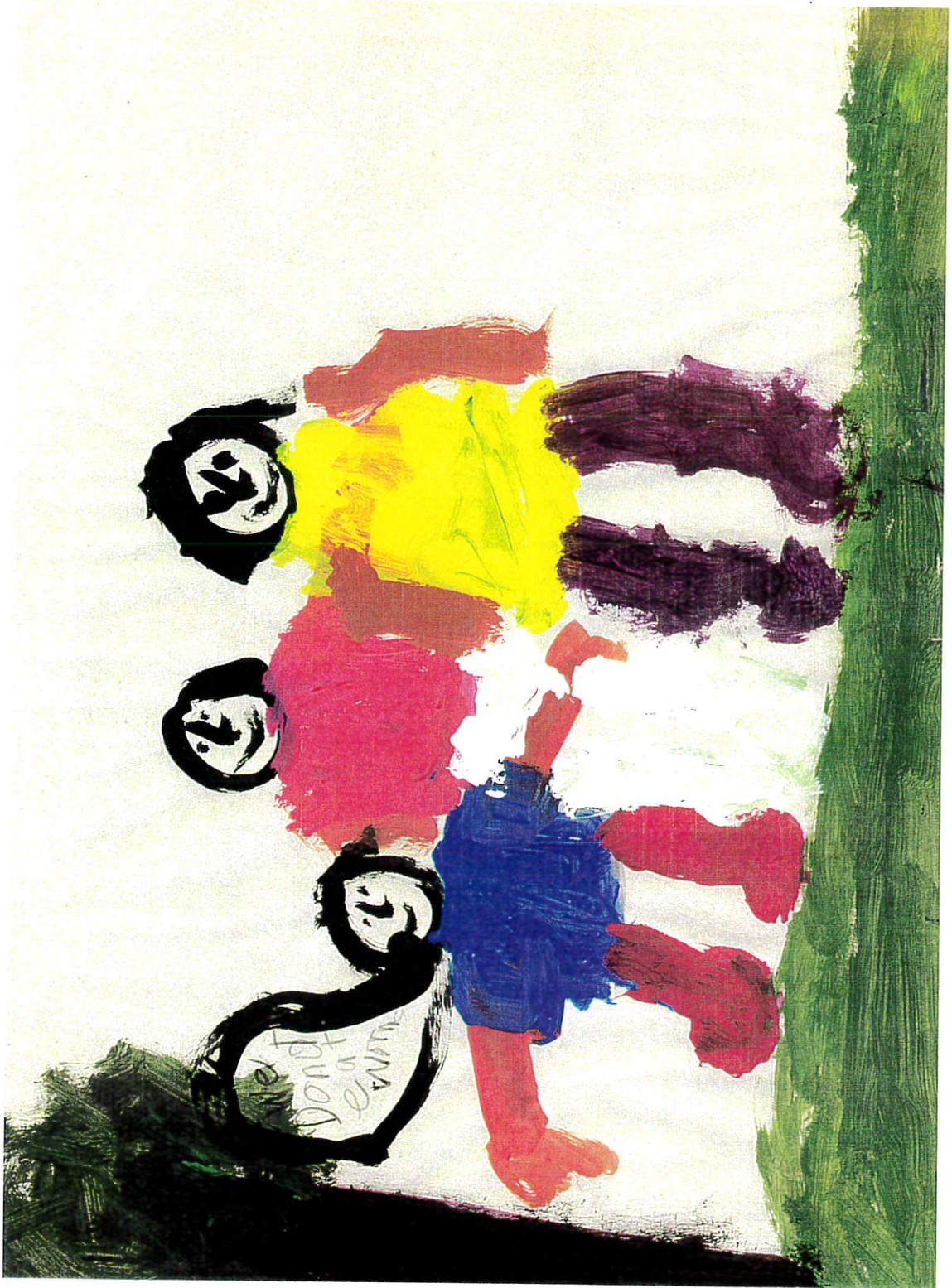


Figure XV

When they offered the ~~piece~~<sup>rice</sup> & said  
we do not eat white worms and ~~this~~<sup>the</sup>  
man said this is not white worms ~~this~~<sup>is</sup>  
rice. Try it!

Figure XVI

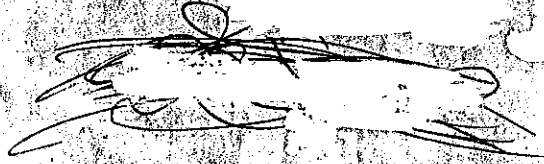


Figure XVII

This is the part where the mountain people are laughing at the valley people because they thought the rice was white worms. There is the people laughing and the pig roasting.

They are wearing brown sleeveless shirts made of cotton thread and shorts.

They look a little darker than a Filipino kid mixed with an American kid. They are 5-8 and are laughing and smiling. They have hair that is up to their shoulders (Boys & girls). There is stars and smoke in the sky. It is a full moon. The fire lights everything (the roasting fire).



This is when the people are showing rice. Then  
the little girl says, "We don't want to be  
rude, but we don't eat little white  
worms." And that's when the other people  
start laughing.

Figure XVIII



Figure XIX



I painted a straw house, sacks of rice, and the hunters.  
The hunters carry the sacks. The sacks contain  
rice. The cottage is where the hunters  
for the people put the food in.

