

The mythology class and trese: the two comic novels essay sample

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



Thesis: An Emerging Strategic Vision on Philippine Native Mythology in Modern Times: The Mythology Class and Trese Darna, Captain Barbell, ZsazsaZaturna, FacificaFalayfay, these are the super heroes that we all know of in this generation. To us Filipinos comics were not that of an importance because we consider them as “ baduy” but because of the works of Mars Ravelo and Gerry Alanguilan they gave a shocking wave to the Filipinos that comics created by Filipino artists can be of world class quality and cannot be considered as “ baduy”. Lately Filipino artists are creating comics that speak about Philippine native mythology to be able to relay the story to the new generation such as The Mythology Class by Arnold Arre and Trese by Budjette Tan and KajoBaldisimo. Before we start with that we should answer this question first, “ What is mythology?” It is an organized collection of stories (i. e., “ myths”) by which we explain our beliefs and our history. Beneath the story-lines, myths usually confront major issues such as the origin of humanity and its traditions, and the way in which the natural and human worlds function on a profound, universal level.

Other myths, however, seem merely to narrate the deities’ daily activities — their love affairs and pleasures, their jealousies and rages, their ambitions and schemes, and their quarrels and battles.(Stout, J. H., 2012) We have two graphic novels that we can proudly say that is really Filipino. We have Trese by Budjette Tan and KajoBaldisimo. Trese is a horror/crime komiks title created by writer Budjette Tan and artist KajoBaldisimo. It follows the story of Alexandra Trese, a mysterious detective that deals with crimes of supernatural origin mainly occurring in the capital region of the Philippines. Alexandra steps in to protect the streets of Manila when the police can’t deal

with the supernatural weirdness that appears. Whenever she's needed, Trese arrives, often called in by Captain Guerrero, the Commissioner Gordon to Trese's unconventional Batman, a man who seems singularly predisposed to lean on her knowledge and specific skills. Supported by two mysterious and obviously magical creatures of uncertain powers - the always stylish Kambal, she's always there to protect Manila from supernatural threat.

Comparisons to Hellblazer and Vertigo were supplanted in this story with a familiar feel - this has the glorious scale and import of Ellis and Cassaday's Planetary, with Trese functioning as the spiritual and supernatural protector of Manila, delivering her world safe and sound, no matter what it takes, whilst we get to investigate alongside, all the weird and wonderful her mystical existence has to offer. It fuses Philippine horror mythology with graphic storytelling and dark art in telling the story of Alexandra Trese, a detective who specializes in supernatural cases (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trese>, 2012). Even though they mentioned here that it is a horror comic once I have read it I realized that even if I read it during 3 a. m. I wouldn't be really scared. We have grown up hearing about the different creatures in the dark that seem to scare children.

We don't venture out in after 6 p. m. because we might be kidnapped by dwendes or tikabalangs. These comics revived my interest in these creatures and realized that they are part of our culture. One would think that you were not born in the Philippines if you have not heard about the creatures of the night. Detective novels have been very interesting in and solving crimes always have a special place in my heart. One of the aspects that should be

noted is that Trese is female lead character and she has supernatural beings helping her every time she solves a case. Trese is a character that one can't forget. She is our ideal superhero with the right amount of butt-kicking, gun shooting and magic rolled into one. With the second novel, it can be noted that Trese solves individual cases and most of the cases are not that really connected to each other it brings a lot of suspense when we realize that each case actually involves the supernatural. These are modern crimes but then it gets a supernatural twist in the story. It is also notable that even in the other dimension there are also good and bad creatures. There are those who help Trese like the Kambal and the bad character which is Talagbusao.

We have to read books two and three of Trese so here goes for book 2. When dusk arrives in the city of Manila, that's when you become the most likely prey of the criminal underworld. Kidnappers and thieves will be the least of your worries. Beware the criminals that can't be bound with handcuffs nor harmed with bullets. Beware the ones that crave for your blood, those who hold your heart ransom, and the ones that come to steal your soul. When crime takes a turn for the weird, the police call Alexandra Trese (<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/8490939-unreported-murders>, 2012). The four stories are superb and are quite related to city living. We currently are living near the infamous mall and one couldn't help but wonder if the snake son is actually living and kidnaps pretty girls in dressing rooms. If they really exist why do they exist? One could never answer that question and that makes it more fascinating. There was also a mention of Heather Evangelista which is also sounds like Heart Evangelista.

Being in a catholic country the creators of Trese infused the morality issue of abortion and to whatever happens to those unwanted babies. In that case, we being a Catholic or being in a Catholic country was being emphasized.

Case 6 was scariest for me. It showed a lot of zombies waking up and crawling out of their graves. It was definitely a graphic treat for us. Again this showed morality, like revenge doesn't really do anything good and that being apathetic is not really a good attitude especially if you have the authority to do something about the status quo. They all got what they wanted in the end but we have to be reminded that revenge doesn't necessarily bring us any good. The third book is by far my favourite because it tells the story from the beginning to the end. The short stories are interwoven and they are by so awesome. It answered a lot of questions on who are the Kambal and to why did Alexandra Trese start being who she is. One of the best parts was when they met the twins Basilio and Crispin. From the beginning up to the end, we could feel the need to really continue reading and ask more questions on what happened to the different characters.

It was very savage and barbaric. We could have hoped for a better ending for the war god Talagbusao, but it all worked out in the end. Nowadays, mixing the old magic and new technology makes one relate to the past and the present. When Trese trapped him in the virtual world, it made sense since in there at least he will be so occupied and he won't be able to generally hurt a lot of people it is just in the virtual world and his never ending thirst for blood could be addressed to and achieved. Almost all of the

parts of the series could be readily applauded it's just that one thing. The road of baptism for Trese, it wasn't on ink. A lot of years were skipped and it would have been better to show what the other world looks like and what challenges Trese faced. Although his brothers were shown, we have yet to know what their other roles in her life are.

Disappointment loomed when looking at the next page they didn't show the exact ways on how she was baptized as a warrior priestess but on the other hand they could use that scene to build up that story for other novels of Trese and these would probably be in the not so distant future. The second book is Mythology Class by Arnold Arre. The world was in chaos, people didn't believe in Bathala, it was after all it was a new generation. Where people googled when they ask questions, post comments in Facebook when they want to say something, and text when they want to communicate. It was time for the people to regain their beliefs to heroes that our ancestors told us. The world needed new heroes to protect them from unexplained creatures. It all started when Datimbang the wife of Bantugan, Kubin the Ibalon warrior, Aili once servant of Alunsina (that has the ability to see the minds of Bathala's people) and Sulayman the Mantapuli hero. They were tasked to train new heroes from different generations.

The selected persons were not that hard to find after all because they possessed the different qualities that heroes have. Each of them were given a different dream that Tala the white Enkanta gave them, showing them that they have to join a Mythology Class, and since all of them were U. P. students it wasn't hard for Tala to gather them. Nicole was chosen because

she has the knowledge of the creatures and heroes that her grandfather told her when she was still a child and she was considered eye of the group.

Angie, Bob, and Edward were chosen because of their ingenuity that the Kingdom of Ibalon possessed. Lisa seeks answers because of her curiosity that makes her special, she later on learned the language of the creatures. Gina later on revealed that she had Nuno (an Enkanto). Lane was chosen because of her telepathy that the great Diwatas have. Misha was chosen because of her fearless attitude that attracts the creatures and easy for them to capture. And lastly, Gio, Rey, and Sam have warrior instincts that shall soon defend the group against danger.

They had to do assignments, but not just ordinary assignments the first task they had to do was to capture a Kapre at Bulacan, they are docile creatures they scare people but not hurt them. It was successful because of the music prepared by Angie, Bob and Edward and by the dance that Lane performed they captured the whole Kapre herd. The next missions were capturing a legendary bird known as Ibong Adarna that made a child comatose, a Shokoy in Pasig River that creates red tide during mating season, a tiyanak in the Philippine General Hospital that was scaring the patients and Manananggals in Tondo, Manila that were circling the worshipping Mayari, Goddess of the Moon. They had captured 872 Enkantos in just 4 months and their last trial was to capture a Tikbalang, child of the night, which was so violent that they had a difficulty in capturing it; good thing Nicole tamed the Tikbalang and later on became there ally.

After the trials they rejoiced and celebrated, they were heroes now that even the world didn't know of. But Datimbang, Kubin, Aili, and Sulayman had to go to the future to continue their quest in training the new generations.

Unknowingly after the trials they had gone through, the Aswangs that Lamang should have disposed of had escaped and eventually brutally killed Lamang. They seek vengeance to the world; they want to rule the world. They learned to use weapons and now they are just waiting for the right time to attack. During their quest Nicole and Kubin slowly fell in love with each other, after how many centuries of fighting the Ibalon warrior finally found his one true love. But he had to go, to continue the quest, for it was a journey that they must do to protect the world from unearthly creatures. It was not only Nicole and Kubin but also Misha and Rey who were once in a relationship but they ended badly. Rey and Misha were always arguing every time they were together but because of the journey they had, they eventually were falling again for each other.

Then the time finally came when the Aswangs were capturing them one by one. First, Misha was dragged into a hole in the fitting room of the mall while Lane finally saw Siring and opened her eyes for the danger that will come upon them. Even Datimbang didn't have the time to prepare for the attack they did to her. Gio, Rey, Sulayman, Edward, Angie, even Nicole was almost devoured by the monster good thing Kubin and Tikbalang rescued her right on time. Datimbang was saved by Nuno by getting rid of the bad spirit that went inside her body; it was the time that Gina finally asked a favor to Nuno after all the hardships she had to endure while Nuno was staying at her

place. Kubin fought the Aswangs with all his might to protect Nicole from them but he couldn't help it they were too many for him, they kept on coming and finally he fought a one on one against the Aswang warrior and he was injured badly.

Nicole tried her best to escape from the Aswangs in the helicopter; she was kicking, punching, and screaming. Finally she bit the Aswang and she was thrown outside the helicopter, she was so afraid that she closed her eyes and believed that someone or something will save her from her predicament. When she opened her eyes it was Bantugan's hand that saved her and keeping her alive, later on Lam-ang extended his hands and asked Nicole to take it. Meanwhile the captured victims witnessed the awakening of Sitan, a gigantic serpent, which will feast on to them because of its millennia of sleep. The ones that was left behind which was Datimbang, Gina, Lane, Aili, Bob and Nuno started an incantation and used the gifts that Lam-ang gave for them to be able to defeat the Aswangs which are a leaf taken from the first tree planted by MariangMakiling that will protect anyone that ensnared by the arms of danger; the wooden talisman of Dumakulem the hunter god that unleashes a fighting spirit; the seed of the sky-god Idianale that calls upon the mighty powers of the east; the cloth of Manganguay that shall create chaos and confusion amongst the enemy; and lastly the blossom of wealth gives reward to a fatigued soul.

While Nicole witnessed the prophecy that Bathala has seen in their fight and it is only them that can defeat the Aswangs. By the help of the gifts of Lam-ang they were able to escape from the Aswangs and were slowly defeating

them little by little. They attacked and fought with all their might to defeat them, but they were too many they kept coming from everywhere attacking them. Then they saw a latest high-tech model of car and used it to escape the Aswang but the Aswangs were persistent they used the car of Rey to chase them but as Bathala prophesied they escaped and defeated the chasing Aswangs. It was time for Kubin to defeat the serpent, Kubin was almost defeated he was wrapped the tongue of the serpent with its gigantic teeth that could kill an instant. It was Nicole that cut the tongue of the serpent by aiming her arrow to slice the tongue for Kubin to give the final blow and finally end the biggest battle they had encountered. They celebrated and Nuno gave them the final gift that Lam-ang gave them the blossom of wealth and gave all his gold to them and joined the quest of Datimbang.

They all shared the gold that Nuno gave them and invested in a lot of things. Angie and Edward had a music bar, Misha and Lane had a Coffee shop with a combination of fortune telling, Gina even opened herself in entering into a relationship, Rey, Gio, and Bob continued their quest by capturing criminals and called themselves Vigilantes. Rey and Misha were finally together and they argued less than before. Nicole was heartbroken because Kubin was leaving, she was very lonely despite she got an excellent grade in her thesis paper that she failed during her first defense she was still missing the person that saved her life a lot of time. But Bathala had bigger dreams for them after how many days of thinking about Kubin, Tala appeared and pointed where Kubin was waiting for her. Kubin stayed with Nicole but they need to

have 10 children just to replace Kubin in his quest as Datimbang told him.

This story is a classic tale of friendship, love story and adventure. It is one of the stories that tell us about Philippine mythology during modern times.

It also used UP which is quite the place for the idiosyncrasies and oddities. It is quite common to believe that there are really other supernatural beings at work in that place. The setting of the story makes one believe that in every campus and university, there are students who have magic and do these kinds of things in secret. A mix of modern equipment and magic working together can make them really good to read and enjoy especially for students. The plot was quite enjoyable since we were able to read the complete graphic novel without interruptions and delay. Love is present in any story and the constant bickering between the lovers is a comic relief to the scary environment. It is so enjoyable and easier to understand since they were teenagers and almost all of the personalities in the book are indeed true to life and you can find these personalities in either yourself or in your friends.

It also tells us to be more interested in the different characters of our own mythology; we always have the nuno sa punso and the ever powerful tikbalang. Incorporated to the story are sometimes real life situations and the different evils that are ever present in our world. There was the construction of the biggest mall and they brought out the evil in the banga which are the aswangs. Those aswangs are like blood sucking vampires but then they eat human flesh and not just the blood. They also tried to wake up their greatest master which is the snake. Now, every time there is big evil

involved they usually use the creature snake probably it has a reference to the Bible wherein the evil behind the downfall and expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was actually a snake. Often the story takes an unexpected turn and it was all too good to be true. Like for example on the part that in just a mere four months they were able to capture everything. Now that was just too good to be true but then they still had one major battle on which they were not that prepared but they were still able to defeat the powerful aswang clan. Not only that, they were also able to defeat the serpent.

They were indeed a band of misfits but then even though they are quite different from each other each person has a different characteristic that is equally important in making their quest successful. They each have their own story to tell. In the end, when they received a lot of gold, they used it for good and donated it to a lot of charities but even though they donated already, they still have a lot left so they were able to do whatever they want and build their own businesses. The story also didn't just leave us hanging it gave a good ending to each of the characters and gave them a story to go on and continue. Both of the stories actually reflect each of our mythologies. We must remember though that most of our myths don't have official titles since they were passed down through oral tradition so the myths have different versions with slight variations of the story. We read these stories and we meet the characters.

We enjoy reading them. One of the things that are really appreciated in both of these stories are that they are proudly our own, the drawings and graphics

have a Filipino style and unlike foreign comics which have colour in their drawings, what sets it apart is that they are both black and white. Although colours are more enticing to the eyes, sometimes plain black and white takes us back in time where these things were actually believed in rather than cool-coloured pictures now. In using this strategy it created an inexpensive way for the students to reconnect to our own mythology. In this way to the authors can introduce these characters to us without having to worry about the added worry of what colours the supernatural beings in the Philippines were. This also raises the question of what do they actually look like with colour? Do they still have brown skin or are dark skinned like the Negritos?

Both of them actually didn't answer that question. So then is it the author's way of stimulating our brains and to using our imagination to look for the answers? If that is the case, then it generally got us interested and in this way we can focus more on research and read more on our mythology.

Graphic novels are easy to read and understand both of them used easy to understand pictures but the graphics of Trese were more defined and broader. It used darker lines and detailed pictures. It is more gory and the fight scenes were better. However, in mythology class they were more on the cartoon style and used irregular lines and funny caricatures. They were like childish drawings. On the story mythology class focused on love and adventure where as in Trese, she didn't have a love interest. Trese focused on the mysteries that she has to solve, on the different adventures and on the creatures on that she has to kill.

She focused on guns and on different ways on how to kill the creatures. In Mythology class they were more bent on just capturing the creatures and in talking to them in a good way so that they would go back to their original world. Communication and proper ways of talking to the “engkantos” was the way of the band of students. Trese was more on the shot now and talk later. She has this precise way of showing that she is in-charge and her every word should be followed. She is her own boss and everybody must follow her. Now she does the best in her every move. Every move is calculated and precise. In Mythology class, the friendships that they developed were quite good and even though they have different characteristics they used their different characters to make a good team. One of the funniest parts of the book was when they tried to capture the tikblang. It was high on drugs so it had incredible speed and it couldn't feel any pain and anything. It was hilarious. It really had funny parts.

The only thing that was quite funny in Trese was in book 3 when one of the twins regenerated his arm and he said it tickles. It was funny but then it was also gory, imagining the different body fluids and you have to see the whole thing grow. It was funny yet horrific to see. The books that we have read really improved our view on Philippine mythology. It made us re-oriented on what is really our own and not to be fixated on another countries' mythologies. One of the reasons for this is the advertising that others are always better than us. We have great stories and we can really enjoy them so much. Then why do some people don't take our mythology that seriously? According to Jocano “ Many colleges and universities do not carry a course

on it in their curriculum; instead, they have Greek and Roman mythologies as major offerings.” (Jocano, F. L. 1969) Well, maybe educators have a little fault on that but then we have to think about it in a bigger picture. Although, knowing a lot about another country’s mythology is important, too.

We have to consider that knowing our different mythologies and learning from them could make us more socially ready for the future. We learn from the different stories of our mythology. Roman and Greek mythology have longer stories and epics and are more organized. In the Philippines, our mythology is made up of different short stories which sometimes differ from one region or island from another. One of the reasons that also affect this is our mentality. We usually read the stories in comics and we tend to see comics as “ baduy”. That’s why we don’t want to know these. In reality we read the other countries’ books and we talk about them more. Nowadays, there are a lot of movies that show Egyptian, Roman and Greek mythologies especially since Rick Riordan books started to be on the bestseller’s list on almost every country. We read more about them and find it more interesting.

I really also appreciate that graphic novels have invaded and introduced to the younger generation. In this way, since the brilliant creation of the comics in the new generation, we are able to explore our own mythology. One comment though on the binding of Trese’s book was that it is easily removed and even though it was only opened a little bit. It was like falling apart already. That is one of the things that they need to improve on the comics. We need to improve the quality of the graphic novels so that it could globally competitive and we could compare it even to the international bestseller of

Rick Riordan's books. These narratives are basic to our social tradition; they constitute part of our social heritage. (Jocano, F. L. 1969) It is considered to be very important because they constitute part of our social heritage. It is always natural for a person to try to understand and ask questions to our society. In our culture, we have a lot of experiences that sometimes we can't understand why it is happening to us.

When we try to look for the answers to the things that are happening around us, we try to find the inner meanings. We have a lot of myths in our country but then only a few people would think of these as an important part of our culture. Most of us would think that these are just stories that our abuelito or abuelita would tell us to force us to stop playing under the mango trees near the house. The scary "nuno sa punso" or the "tikbalangs" or the "dwendes" that try to steal children these scary stories were always told with hushed voices to add to the drama and achieve the scary effect. We would think that these are just stories. Actually, they are stories but they are not just stories. These myths tell us what we are as part of the community and our society. When we were young, we loved to hear these stories because they also give us a lot of lessons in the end. We are also fascinated to know that there is another world besides the one that we are living in. One of the most fascinating things that are in our native mythology is the names of the different gods and goddesses.

The names are derived from the actual names that we call our world now. For example in the Visayan version of the creation, we can see the names of Likalibutan, Liadlao, Libulan, Lidagat and Lihangin. Upon reading these

names, the realization of how names were being used for the explanation of the natural world were really utilized during the time of our ancestors. Our ancestors not only made understanding the different elementals easier they also made it very interesting. In the Filipino culture where the family is the most important thing, they used a family so that we could relate to it. One of the interesting noted upon reading the mythology of the Philippines is that arranged marriages between prominent families are quite common. In the Philippines, a story is not a good one if there is no villain. Even though how much a family tries to protect its children from the horrors and the evils that lurk around in the corner, it still creeps slowly on the family.

One example of this is Likalibutan's gain of power and his goal to gain more power. Although he already had a lot of power he still wanted to gain more power and in doing so he went gathered more power and support from his brothers and tried to kill his own grandfather to gain control over everything. Gaining more power has been a driving force to a lot of people in our society. This drives them to do bad things or to do greater things in order for them to reach this goal. Although power is good sometimes too much of it can bring us to our downfall. Respect in our elders is also highlighted, underlined and in capital bold letters in our mythology. A highly respected person is given much respect and always has a high position in the society. This is also reflected in our society nowadays. I can say the authors have somehow succeeded in the fight to make artists of graphic novel be acknowledged of their world class creations. Last September 7, 2010,

Senator Lito Lapid filed a bill on the 15th Congress Senate Bill No. 2485 which is the PHILIPPINE NATIONAL GRAPHIC NOVEL ARCHIVE ACT OF 2010.

It is “ An Act to Establish the Philippine National Graphic Novel Archive, Appropriating Funds Therefore and for Other Purposes” (http://www.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=15&q=SBN-2485, 2010). Although the bill is still pending in the committee and there are no signs of its progress.

This is a direct quotation from Gerry Alanguilan website about this topic. On how this bill will be “ The proposed National Graphic Novel Archive would play a key role in documenting and interpreting Filipino art and experience in the field of graphic novels and in actively contributing to the development of the country’s graphic novel industry. It would be tasked to collect, store, preserve and make available indigenous graphic novel materials relevant to arts and culture in the country. The Archive would strive to make the locally produced graphic novels accessible to the widest possible audience in the country and promote and enhance the development of the industry to ensure its sustainability.” (<http://gerry.alanguilan.com/archives/2906>, 2010).

Even the very popular Gerry Alanguilan commented on the bill. He said that “ The National Library’s track record as far as comics and graphic novels go isn’t exactly encouraging. Remember this is the same agency that refused to give ISBNs to comics because people there believed comics had “ no research value” as if it’s within their power to refuse any publication ISBNs (it’s NOT). I’ve also heard reports from komiks collectors of how collected editions of printed komiks were allowed to rot and thrown out because they

had no space. To have them be in charge of something like this doesn't seem like a smart move. It seems to me that many people there have no respect for komiks or even understand their historical and cultural value. A drastic change has to occur in their staff and in their policy before I can trust them with something like this." (<http://gerry.alanguilan.com/archives/2906>, 2010).

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