

# They Speak Too

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## notes on coloniality

Spain and the Basque Country are in the midst of a three-year national celebration: the Quincentennial of Elcano's/Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe, heralded as a feat for all humanity in the name of science, in the spirit of discovery. It is a project of "special public interest" and has engaged Basque institutions on the national, provincial and local levels. In 2015 the Basque Parliament unanimously voted to pass a motion delineating "special strategic importance" to the Quincentennial by the Basque Autonomous Community's public institutions in the interest of making the Basque Country known internationally through the figure of Elcano<sup>1</sup>. The Spanish government has offered tax breaks of up to 90% to companies creating events based around the Quincentennial<sup>2</sup>.

The ambition of making Spain and the Basque Country internationally known while allowing for only a partial field of vision, an ambition whose recourse is a deliberately inoculated semantics that erases histories of violence, creating a levelled space void of complexities the better to lay claim to it; these actions ring too familiar for their irony to be humorous.

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<sup>1</sup> *What have we got to celebrate? What have they got to hide?* by Axier Lopez. Accessed 16.01.2020.  
<https://www.argia.eus/albisteak/what-have-we-got-to-celebrate-what-have-they-got-to-hide>

<sup>2</sup> *What have we got to celebrate? What have they got to hide?* by Axier Lopez. Accessed 16.01.2020.  
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<sup>3</sup> p. 320. Santiago, Arminda Vallejo. *Book review: Cine by Nick Deocampo*. *Philippine Studies* Vol. 51, no. 2 (2003): 319-321. Ateneo de Manila University.

As a Filipino, this posturing and indeed this celebration is an uncomfortable phenomenon. Considering film historian Nick Deocampo's claim that "cinema may have been the last major cultural legacy the Philippines derived from its Spanish coloniser"<sup>3</sup>, my project investigates the representations of this three-hundred-year relationship through the lens of our respective visual cultures. As indicators of collective consciousness, what can we understand from our respective countries' films related to this period? How can we relate our present to what is represented and, perhaps more importantly, to what is not? Using the Quincentennial celebrations as a point of departure and cinema as its vantage point, it proposes an exploration that is intertextual in its approach and with multiple manifestations.

The initial presentation of this project was of a phase that is still ongoing: gathering and critically analysing films from the Philippines and Spain related to this period. As texts these films, a few of which I discuss below, indicate tendencies and can be read as practices that consciously frame this period and our respective roles within it to specific ends.

Films in the Philippine mainstream, reconsider influential revolutionary heroes, a possible effort at questioning the nationalism that runs strongly through all facets of Philippine culture. An example is the classic production by Lumberto Avellana, *Lapu Lapu* (1954), an expression of post-liberation euphoria (from

both the United States and Japan). Hailed as the Philippines' first national hero for killing Magellan in the Battle of Mactan in 1521, the film consolidates nationalist pride with an idealisation of Filipino-ness through the figure of Lapu Lapu. With multiple statues erected in his appearance and even a city named after him, Lapu Lapu commands a near god-like status in the Philippines.



Mario Montenegro and Priscilla Cellona in Lumberto Avellana's *Lapu Lapu* (1954).  
Photo from Video48's blogspot.

It is no wonder then that when the 2019 animated feature *Elkano y Magallanes: la primera vuelta al mundo* (Ángel Alonso) was marketed in the Philippines, inviting Filipinos to come see Lapu Lapu (depicted as an evil savage), the campaign flopped. A co-production between Spanish and Basque money made expressly to kick-off the Quincentennial celebrations, it was scheduled for Philippine release in early 2020. This was canceled when a Twitter storm raged with angry Filipinos criticising the film for what they saw as

glorification of their former colonisers. The disparity between the perceived enthusiasm for the film by its producers and its actual reception in the Philippines speaks to the differing understandings of the legacy of this initial encounter.



Promotional poster for *Elkano y Magallanes: la primera vuelta al mundo* (2019) by Ángel Alonso.

Films from Spain feature the bookends of the age of Spanish Imperialism: its beginning, with the coming of Magellan's expedition, and its end with the last stand of the Spanish garrison in the church of Baler. In omitting three hundred years of Spanish involvement on the islands, the focus of these facets of visual culture betray the interest of Spanish discussions of colonial history in re-living the glory of their days as a world power. In addition to their partial vision, these films conceive of colonialism as a distant occurrence, one removed in both time and space.

Antonio Román's *Los últimos de Filipinas* (1945), metaphorically embodying the claustrophobia of Franco's dictatorship<sup>4</sup>, is a perfect example of how colonial narratives are used as backdrops against which the self-reflective (but never self-critical) narratives of former powers play out against. The 2016 remake by Salvador Calvo, *1898: Los últimos de Filipinas*, was little different, catering to similar sentiments of restoring a deflated ego updated with drone shots and an all-star cast. Jesús Valbuena's 2018 documentary *Los Últimos de Filipinas: Return to Baler*, also exemplifies this tendency. An amateur production, the documentary features interviews with descendants of the Spanish soldiers describing the trauma of the siege and using CGI animation to illustrate the event. As a testament to the courage of the soldiers, the film might be excused its short comings, were it not for the resulting Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day, celebrated annually in the town of Baler since 2002. Thanks in part to the efforts of director Valbuena, the town reenacted the exit of the Spanish troupes from the church in this celebration, with their Spanish descendants parading the Spanish flag before the town's Filipino population in a grotesque display of misplaced celebration.



Still from the final scene of Antonio Román's *Los últimos de Filipinas* (1945).



Promotional poster for *1898: Los últimos de Filipinas* (2016) by Salvador Calvo.

<sup>4</sup> Alberto Elena. *Antología crítica del cine español*. Cátedra / Filmoteca Española (1997) p.198. "Como muy bien ha subrayado Santos Zunzunegui (1994, pag. 20) en un estudio reciente, *Los últimos de Filipinas* se erige indisimuladamente en un film histórico de carácter metafórico construido en torno a la idea temática de la soledad del aislamiento, que ciertamente para el espectador español de mediados de los cuarenta debía de tener nítidas y evidentes resonancias extra-cinematográficas en un contexto de cerco internacional y paranoia ante la supuesta conjura exterior".

Eng translation: "As Santos Zunzunegui (1994, p. 20) has rightly pointed out in a recent study, *Los últimos de Filipinas* stands unmistakably as a historical film of a metaphorical nature built around the thematic idea of the solitude of isolation, which certainly for the Spanish viewer of the mid-forties must have had clear and evident extra-cinematographic resonances in a context of international encirclement and paranoia about the supposed external conspiracy".

The relationship between Valbuena's film and this national holiday - and indeed any of the Spanish titles discussed - could be an example of a sort of hyper-reality, a state wherein images, in their repeated iterations, come to form our reality. In his consideration of mass media Jean Baudrillard discusses the way images and their (re)iterations mediate our understanding of reality. According to him, we live in an age where images are created and reproduced (the simulacra) repeatedly straying further away from the original. These images and their significance are subjected to a cycle of interpretation, reproduction and imbibing that serve to eradicate their complexities without losing their indexical relationship to 'truth'.

With regards to how historical events are 'preserved' and depicted in mass media, the rituals they inspire, the selective memory it utilises; considering the ways that these images' political and aesthetic neutrality engender indifference rather than examination of the complexities of historic interpretation - are we seeing this hyper-reality in action?



Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day 2017 - Descendants of the Spanish soldiers walk out of the church in Baler, where the siege was held.  
From Jesús Valbuena's *Los Últimos de Filipinas: Return to Baler* (2018).

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I am struck by how differently the two countries relate to colonialism. Much of Philippine film, and indeed art in general, deals in one way or another with our colonial legacy. The consideration of coloniality for the Filipino subject (as I suspect it must be for all formerly colonised peoples) is a process of constant interpellation between symbols in our present with relics from our past. The works of some of the country's biggest artists (Raya Martin, Kidlat Tahimik, Santi Bose, Yason Banal, Jewel Maranan to name a few) span across media and periods but are nonetheless expressions of this process.

In their works, the Philippine body - here meant in every sense of the word: the corporeal, the singular, the group, an organisation, the physical manifestation, the ineffable concept - is presented as both actor in and surface upon which the lasting expressions of colonialism is played out. It moves within it, always, and cannot present itself without its marks.

This experience is a question, a recurring one, asked compulsively. The question stems as much from the individual as the collective, from the structural and the tangential aspects of Philippine life. It recurs because of the impossibility of a conclusive response. To make art in the Philippines is to respond to life in the Philippines, which is to say to be in incessant contact with the experiences of coloniality, past and present. It is a practice of constant self-reflection, of encountering versions of narratives, their effect upon our reality as important as their veracity. It is a practice of collecting disparate parts, parts that move, crash into each other, disappear, change face. These parts are always very personal. Thus, in The Philippines, the situation of empire in place and time is never questioned. It is always present.

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I first encountered Luis H. Francia's work when, in my early twenties, I began to take a more concerned interest in Philippine history. Two of Francia's books are of particular value to me: *A History of the Philippines: from Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (2010) and *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999* (2002), which Francia co-edited with fellow Fil-Am scholar and filmmaker Angel Shaw.

*A History* presented a comprehensive view of the cultural, historical and political influences that form(ed) the Philippine state, which I read at a time when I was personally trying to decipher the signs of Philippine life. In his foreword, Francia explains his decision to call it *A History* (as opposed to *The*) understanding that history is subject to interpretation, that greater clarity about our present is dependent on how pieces of the past are assembled, and that his version may well be subject to reinterpretation by future generations. I appreciated the honesty in his writing about history as a shifting, movable entity, and the humble understanding of his place in it as both subject and interlocutor.

*Vestiges of War* gathers essays, academic texts, paintings, films and work in other media by prominent Filipino and American artists, writers and academics, practices of looking at the Philippine-American War and its aftermath. The anthology remains a point of reference for approaches to looking-back that acknowledges the multifarious forms history lays its traces, and brought these forms on-par with each other, paintings dialoguing with academic study, filmic representation with archival study, photographs with plays.

It was fortuitous circumstance when I came into contact with Luis himself, who, after hearing about my project, sent me a copy of his play *Black Henry* (2018). It is an exercise in looking at this 'first encounter' that essentially does what the Quincentennial doesn't do. More than an alternative perspective, it presents the actors in this encounter as thinking, moving entities. Magellan and his cohort land in medias res in Cebu. The tribal chieftains Rajah Humabon and Datu Lapu Lapu have a history. They are head of their own kingdoms, structured cultures with their own belief systems and traditions. These belong to a system of trade, routes of commercial and cultural exchange in our sea of islands<sup>5</sup>.

One of its most powerful subversions is the consideration of the Christianisation of Rajah Humabon, his wife Raneé Humamay and their people: conversion as a political ploy rather than an act of submission. It reconsiders the power at play in this initial encounter. Not solely a result of brute force, colonisation is presented as an insidious force taking root through its most effective tool: religion. Here, conversion is approached by Humabon as a strategy for survival, conceived to gain the invaders' trust in order to undo them. The result is not without its sense of irony, as the Philippines today remains the only Catholic nation in Asia.

What this re-looking suggests is not just a different power play between coloniser and colonised but can also be a reflection on the tragedy of circumstance: at how strategic decisions can unintentionally lead to the worst outcome. This is not an attempt at shifting blame for the resulting years of conquest or meant to diminish the violence in colonial exploitation; rather it bolsters the depiction of Humabon and co. as active

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<sup>5</sup> "There is a world of difference between viewing the Pacific as 'islands in a far sea' and as 'a sea of islands'. The first emphasises dry surfaces in a vast ocean far from the centres of power. Focussing in this way stresses the smallness and remoteness of the islands. The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships." *Our Sea of Islands*. by Epeli Hau'ofa. pp. 152-153. *The Contemporary Pacific*. Spring 1994.

members, moving within their context and making decisions, with unfortunately tragic results. This as opposed to the depiction of conquered peoples as a vulnerable, inactive group whose motions are only recorded after the fact of colonisation.

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I worked closely with Luis in the beginning of the project, discussing scene selections and the tone of the performance. It was important to find a way of working with Luis's play, one that ensured that I retain the integrity of his work while still creating a own piece. It entailed a certain amount of negotiation with him between his more theatrical influences and my desire to move away from those referents. Given my broad conception of cinema as an investigative tool, including both film theory and practice, creating a film was a natural direction for this phase of the project. It was a practical exercise, an opportunity to trigger processes accessible through the direct action of performance/creation.

It required carefully selecting scenes according to their motivation and their subversive commentary. It also meant pairing each scene with an appropriate location, to have them dialogue with each other. The commentary of the scene had to either resonate with the historical charge of the location, or create

enough tension in order to subvert it. I also attempted to retain a narrative arch in the scene selection; a line of continuity with practical intentions as well as a referral to the text as a play. Not all the selected scenes are featured in this version of the film, as locations that could dialogue with them have yet to be found. As such, *They Speak Too* is a work in progress that has the ambition of continuing this research.

One of the fascinating aspects of this project is its capacity as a natural conduit to researching transmutations of Spanish imperialism, and has in particular illuminated the central role the Basque Country played in its execution. Contemporary Basque national identity takes a contradictory stance with this uncomfortable fact, often viewing themselves as a colonised people while failing to critically engage with the involvement of their industry, natural resources, and individual and political power in the imperial project. For example, Ion Irurzun, member of *Mundu bira 500: Elkano Fundazioa*,<sup>6</sup> characterises Basque involvement as innocent, stating that "at the time 90% of ships were made here; Basque sailors were reputed all around the world; we want to work on the maritime culture which we Basques are connected with."<sup>7</sup> A connection between this maritime culture and the largest state project at the time is not made (or at least not mentioned). In November 2020, the Department of Culture of the Gipuzkoa Provincial Council announced the launch of a graphic novel, *Elcano, el mundo en las Velas* (Elcano, the World in the Wings), to commemorate the eponymous Gipuzkoan's

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<sup>6</sup> *What have we got to celebrate? What have they got to hide?* by Axier Lopez. Accessed 16.01.2020.

<https://www.argia.eus/albisteak/what-have-we-got-to-celebrate-what-have-they-got-to-hide>

The foundation was set up by Basque municipalities in light of the Quincentennial to oversee research and create "a brand around Elcano".

<sup>7</sup> *What have we got to celebrate? What have they got to hide?* by Axier Lopez. Accessed 16.01.2020.

<https://www.argia.eus/albisteak/what-have-we-got-to-celebrate-what-have-they-got-to-hide>

participation in the expedition. The book, as with other cultural projects on this subject, frames Elcano as an adventurous hero embodying “the best (...) spirit present in Gipuzkoa”<sup>8</sup>

A turn of semantics allows for such a naive take; words such as ‘discovery’, ‘expansion’ or phrases like ‘connecting cultures’ are used often and again by Basque, Spanish and Portuguese institutions<sup>9</sup> to certify the innocence of the circumnavigation as a feat for humanity and legitimise the Quincentennial. Long a tool of power and control, language is once again in the employ of interests seeking to “reframe violence as peaceful mission”<sup>10</sup>

As the perfect instrument of empire, the issue of language and what can be defined as such is a focal point of *They Speak Too*. The scene selections were translated to Spanish<sup>11</sup>, a conceptual decision that lent itself to the idea of triggering myself, a subject from a formerly colonised country, as a symbol. The provocation of having a person speak in the language of their former coloniser presented itself naturally; what was unexpected was the degree to which I personally felt an affinity to the language. Tagalog (one of the main languages in the Philippines and one which I speak) has strong Spanish influence (Tagalog formations such as ‘kalye’, ‘kabayo’, or the colloquial greeting ‘kamusta?’ are a few examples), and so recognition of words and pronunciation

(vowels are pronounced similarly, as are the heavy consonants) came relatively easy to me. I felt like I knew what I was reading, though in truth, I really didn’t. This misaligned identification was a confusing personal realisation, an internalised part of the colonial experience brought to my attention through this performance.

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I think about the act of speaking. The elements of voice, power, sound; silence - a prerequisite for sound to mark itself against, to gain clarity. Speaking removes you from the silent mass, a relief against a smooth surface. It is a disruption as well as a focal point. Through the voice, it is thought embodied, a rumination that makes me giddy when I think of oral traditions, of how words and their formulations can be thought to carry a direct charge from those who spoke before you. Speaking is also an empowering act, daring to make yourself heard with the understanding that this space is as much yours as anyone else’s.

Anna de Guia-Eriksson  
EQZE. San Sebastian.  
December 2020.

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<sup>8</sup> “...representa lo mejor de un espíritu muy presente en Gipuzkoa”. from ‘El departamento de Cultura presenta el comic ‘Elcano, el mundo en las Velas’’. online article. accessed 27.11.2020.

<sup>9</sup> see Spain and Portugal’s application to UNESCO for the Route of Magellan as World Heritage Site; the official Spanish Quincentennial website; Elcano Fundazioa website.

<sup>10</sup> *Debating “Discoveries”: Colonialism & Public History in Portugal* by Alfonso Ramos Dias. Accessed 18.02.2020. <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/Portuguese-discoveries/>

<sup>11</sup> translations from the original English to Spanish were done by Mariana Sánchez Bueno.



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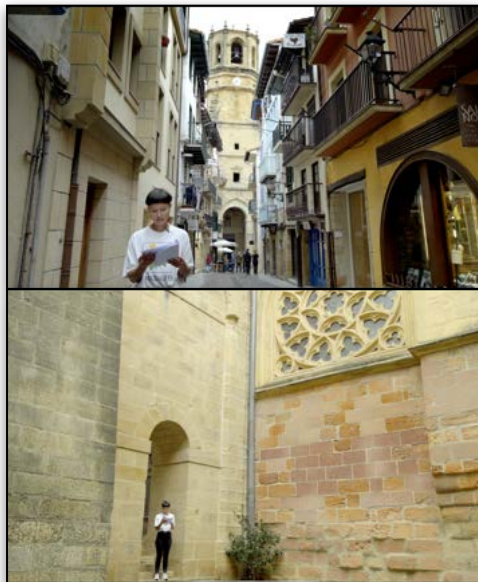
## locations

### Kalea Matía - San Sebastian

Named after the Basque merchant Jose Matía Calvo, this is the high street of Antiguó. A native of Laudio (Araba), Matía spent his adolescence in the colonies of Cuba and the Philippines. He founded his mercantile business *Matía, Menchacatorre y Cía* between Manila and Cadiz.

Through this company, he made his fortune in the trading of Asian slaves, mostly Chinese, transporting them to the Hispanic colonies of Panama, Cuba and Peru, among others.

The *Bella Vascongada*, a ship in his fleet, is of particular import; in 1854 it transported hundreds of Chinese labourers to Panama to work on the railroad connecting the two oceans. It is estimated that 12,000 of these workers died in the course of this project due to tropical diseases or suicide, as a result of being abandoned.



### Church of San Salvador - Getaria

On the site of this gothic church the first *Junta General* (General Assembly) was held in 1397, founding the *Hermanad de Gipuzkoa* (Gipuzkoan Brotherhood). This association laid down the foundation for the Gipuzkoan territory as we know it today. The church itself dates back to the 15th century. It is here that Basque explorer Juan Sebastian Elcano was baptised.

### Monument to Juan Sebastian Elcano - Getaria

Erected in 1924 under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, this monument was commissioned to celebrate the 4th centennial of the circumnavigation of the globe.

Juan Sebastian Elcano is commemorated here as the first circumnavigator of the globe, a title which granted him a coat of arms upon his return.



### Port of Pasaia - Pasaia

It is through this port that the Royal Guipuzkoan Company of Caracas, later the Royal Philippine Company, conducted much of its trade. They had a fleet of 40 ships that ran trading routes stretching from the Basque Country to the colonies in South America and the Philippines.

This company, founded by wealthy Basques, proved to be incredibly lucrative for their shareholders and the Basque Country at the time.

The port continues to play an important role in the supply chain of the iron, steel and car industries.

## ENRIQUE EL NEGRO

By Luis H. Francia  
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Spanish translations by Mariana Sánchez Bueno

### ELENCO DE PERSONAJES

Magallanes	Enrique
Rajah	Humabon Rancee Humamay
Abbas	Pigafetta
Carvalho	Barbosa
Serrano	Padre Valderrama
LapuLapu	Datu Bato
Princess Ylang	Jasmine
Kawal 1 & 2	Pedro
asistentes variados, guerreros, etc.	

### ESCENARIO

1521.

Las islas Visayan de Cebú y Maktan. La acción se lleva a cabo en marzo y abril.

El lado derecho del escenario debe parecerse a la cubierta de un barco.

El lado izquierdo debe parecerse al interior del palacio del Rajá o a un gran salón.

El centro del escenario debe parecer una playa.

**Acto I, Escena 1:** Marzo. La isla y reino de Cebú. Rajah Humabon, la Princesa Ylang y Abbas, en el palacio de Humabon. Humabon tiene cuarenta y tantos años, es un hombre corpulento y tatuado, viste salawal de seda y chaleco. Abbas viste de manera similar y lleva un turbante. Tiene poco más de cuarenta años. Ylang tiene 23 años, es la hermosa sobrina de Humabon y su ayudante.

HUMABON

Abbas, tú que has conocido a navegantes parecidos a este extranjero barbudo, dínos: ¿qué clase de hombre es él?

YLANG

¡Y cómo se atreve a no rendir tributo a nuestro reino!

HUMABON

Después de todo, estas son las tierras y aguas de Cebú... no de... de...

ABBAS

España, señor Humabon.

He oído hablar de este hombre y del poderoso reino que representa.

HUMABON

¿Debería temerle? La Corte Imperial de Catay no da problemas, no exige tributos, no interfiere con el flujo pacífico del comercio entre nuestros comerciantes y los suyos. ¡Y su rey, dices, aunque poderoso, vive a muchas más leguas de distancia que Catay!

ABBAS

Hacia el este, atravesando esa masa de agua impenetrable, de donde vienen las brutales tormentas cada año, un pequeño grupo de hombres como el que manda el barbudo conquistó el vasto reino de un guerrero temible, al que llaman Moctezuma. Y ahora estos hombres - estos conquistadores, como se les conoce - dominan el reino de Moctezuma, y el propio Moctezuma está muerto. Señoría, medite bien cómo actuar. Son hombres que han conquistado muchos reinos, y nada les detendrá hasta reinar sobre estas aguas. Si llega a un acuerdo con este hombre llamado Magallanes, será lo mejor para Cebú.

HUMABON

¿Qué mueve a estos hombres?

ABBAS

Lo que mueve a todos ellos: la codicia, la ambición y la creencia de que su destino es gobernar a los demás. También exigen que sus vasallos adopten sus creencias religiosas. Mis hermanos islámicos lo saben bien - porque han luchado contra ellos- cristianos, los llaman. Pero pueden ser derrotados, y ya lo han sido, por los seguidores de Allah, alabado sea Él. Durante setecientos años, los muyahidines tuvieron bajo su dominio el reino de España.

HUMABON

Entonces, ¿por qué me aconseja que llegue a un acuerdo con él?

ABBAS

Le puede pagar con la misma moneda, su señoría. Haga que Magallanes piense que usted, rey de Cebú, será su aliado. Aprenda todo lo que pueda

sobre sus planes, y así estará preparado para la próxima expedición. O, cuando se haya ganado su confianza, actúe mientras él y sus los barcos todavía están en el puerto.  
Cebe la trampa con miel.

HUMABON

Podríamos trabajar, beber y festejar juntos, sin que nadie tenga que adoptar las creencias de los otros.

YLANG

De la misma manera que siempre hemos trabajado con comerciantes de Guangdong y Fukien, de Okinawa, Java y Sumatra, ...

HUMABON

... como hemos trabajado contigo y con el Reino de Siam.  
Todos nos beneficiamos del comercio sin necesidad de adorar a los mismos dioses.

ABBAS

Estos cristianos son diferentes... Con mucho gusto esclavizarán y matarán en nombre de su dios y su rey. No se detendrán ante nada para construir su imperio cristiano, señoría. Teniendo en cuenta quién es Magallanes y de dónde viene, en el mejor de los casos le verá como a un hermano menor, en el peor de los casos, como a un esclavo que debe servirle a él y a su rey.

HUMABON

¡Esclavo!

ABBAS

Sería imprudente confiar en este hombre o en cualquiera de sus seguidores.

HUMABON

Tengo muchos más hombres que él y lo podría vencer fácilmente si quisiera.

Pero me lo impide la insistencia de Sri Lapu Lapu por tener una parte del dinero que obtenemos de la vigilancia de los estrechos y por el uso de nuestros puertos. Es una insistencia que últimamente roza la insolencia.

Cualquier día hará que antiguos hermanos de armas se vuelvan los unos contra los otros.

ABBAS

Sri Lapu Lapu se podría aliar con el extranjero contra ti...

HUMABON

Temo esa posibilidad.

ABBAS

Señor, ¿usted no se reunirá con su líder, Magallanes?

HUMABON

Sí, mañana, en su buque insignia.

ABBAS

Mi señor, si usted se hiciera el tonto, si diera a entender que usted y su reina podrían seguir su juego, tal vez ellos, y no usted, se hagan cargo del presuntuoso señor de Maktan.

HUMABON

Hablas la lengua de estos hombres, ¿verdad?

ABBAS

Aprendí un poco en Malacca, donde esos hombres vienen a comerciar y a comprar esclavos.

YLANG

He oído que el Capitán General español tiene su propio esclavo.

ABBAS

Su nombre cristiano es Enrique de Malacca y, según dicen, lo tratan como a un hijo. Él habla nuestra lengua y seguramente traducirá para su amo.

HUMABON

¿Habla nuestra lengua? ¿Quizá el Capitán General lo compró en los mercados de esclavos de Malacca? Te pido que estés atento para averiguar si es cierto lo que se dice de este tal Enrique.

ABBAS

A sus órdenes, señoría.

YLANG

Como sabes, querido tío, el Ranee Humamay ha tenido sueños sobre hombres barbudos que llegan a nuestras aguas con nuevas ideas.

HUMABON

Lo sé, Ylang. Ella quiere averiguar lo que saben tras atravesar ese golfo interminable.

ABBAS

Sospecho que el barbudo querrá que usted y todo Cebú renuncien a su fe en Batalha, y a las costumbres de sus antepasados, las costumbres que usted y su pueblo siempre han tenido.

YLANG

¶Pero eso podría ser nuestra muerte!

ABBAS

No perdemos nada por escuchar, incluso su señoría puede llegar a conocer y explotar sus debilidades.

HUMABON

Hablaré con Ranee de esto. Quizá su curiosidad pueda ser la llave de nuestra salvación.

Hasta mañana entonces.

*(Abbas e Ylang hacen una reverencia y salen.)*

**Acto I, Escena 3.** *Palacio. Rajah Humabon, Ranee Humamay y la Princesa Ylang. La Ranee tiene poco más de cuarenta años.*

HUMABON

Humamay, mi reina, ¿qué opinas sobre estos extranjeros y sobre las creencias que traen de tan lejos?

HUMAMAY

Me intrigan. Ylang ha visto a algunos de ellos llevar un amuleto alrededor del cuello.

HUMABON

¿Un amuleto? ¿Similar al nuestro?

YLANG

Muy diferente, mi señor. Y extraño.

Tiene a un hombre atado a una cruz, un hombre que, aparentemente, pertenece tanto a este mundo como al próximo reino. Se le llama Cristo, y creen que es la clave para entrar al paraíso.

HUMABON

¶Un chamán!

YLANG

Al parecer, mucho más que un chamán. Lo adoran como a un dios.

HUMABON

¿Un Dios? Extraño. Pero por el bien de Cebú, Raneé, ¿considerarías adoptar las creencias de estos extraños?

HUMAMAY

¿Hum? Nunca te han gustado las creencias, ni las nuestras ni las de nadie.

HUMABON

Me conoces. Creo solo en lo que alcanza mi lanza. Pero si creer en otro conjunto de creencias puede mantener nuestro reino unido, entonces creeré y me aseguraré de que todos los demás crean.

HUMAMAY

Hablas con rodeos - ¡tan impropio de ti! ¿Querrías que yo adopte esas costumbres extranjeras? pero ¿por qué? ¿Nos están amenazando estos hombres?

HUMABON

Abbas conoce a esos hombres y me aconseja que no me fie de ellos. De hecho, no confío en sus motivos. Y sus armas son más poderosas que cualquiera que hayamos visto. Necesitamos saber qué les trae aquí realmente.

HUMAMAY

¿Qué quieres que haga?

HUMABON

Lo que quiero que hagamos todos. Gánate su confianza, explota sus debilidades. Sonríe, incluso hazte la tonta a veces y, si es necesario, conviértete al instante.

YLANG

¡Pero, mi Señor, eso sería impensable!

HUMAMAY

¿Renunciar a nuestras propias creencias?  
¿Renegar de Batalha? ¿Qué estás diciendo?

HUMABON

Lo que uno tiene en el corazón nadie se lo puede quitar. Solo pido que usted y Ylang le hagan creer a nuestra gente que han adoptado estas nuevas creencias, ese cristianismo. Como el pueblo las ama y confía en ustedes, harán lo mismo, los extranjeros bajarán la guardia y nos dará tiempo a hacer lo que hay que hacer.

HUMAMAY

En otras palabras, ¿engañar a nuestra gente?

HUMABON

Ah, querida, solo hasta que sepamos con certeza lo que estos hombres están tramando. Por el bien de nuestro reino, ustedes dos deben adoptar con convicción el papel de conversas. Además, creo que sus encantos nos llevarán muy lejos sin tener que alejarnos demasiado de casa.



YLANG

Señor, si usted cree que lo mejor para nuestro reino es fingir, haré como desea y ocultaré mis sospechas a estos visitantes.

HUMAMAY

Esta farsa, una vez comenzada, podría convertirse en realidad y tu Rancee en una verdadera monarca cristiana!

HUMABON

Si eso es, lo que el destino nos tiene reservado,  
que así sea! Bathala na!

*(Blackout)*

**Acto II, Escena 3:** *Salón Real de Sri LapuLapu. LapuLapu y Datu Bato. Entra el asistente.*

ASISTENTE

(Reverencia)

Los representantes del capitán extranjero y de Rajah Humabon están aquí para verlo, mi Señor.

LAPULAPU

Que pasen.

(El asistente hace la reverencia, se va. Entran Enrique y Abbas. Hacen la reverencia.)

ENRIQUE Y ABBAS

A-Salaam aleikum!

LAPULAPU Y DATU BATO

Aleikum Salaam!

ABBAS

Mi señor LapuLapu, Datu Bato, este es Enrique, ayudante del jefe que comanda las tres cañoneras ancladas en el puerto de Cebú.

ENRIQUE

(Reverencia)

Señores míos, que las bendiciones de los misericordiosos estén con ustedes!

LAPULAPU

□Y con usted!

ENRIQUE

(Reverencia)

Vengo de parte de mi Capitán General Fernando de Magallanes, leal caballero del Soberano Emperador de España, Carlos Primero, y también de parte de Rajah Humabon. Tienen un mensaje para usted, mi Señor.

LAPULAPU

Veo que hablas nuestra lengua. Y por tu aspecto, parece que alguna vez nadaste en estas aguas cuando eras niño. Seguro que "Enrique" no es tu nombre de nacimiento.

ENRIQUE

Eso fue hace mucho tiempo, señor. Un lugar diferente y un momento diferente.

LAPULAPU

Tengo mucha curiosidad por saber cómo acabaste al servicio del barbudo, quien, según he oído, viene de un imperio lejano, que algunos afirman es el más grande del mundo, incluso más grande que el poderoso reino de Catay.

ENRIQUE

Lo es, señor. El soberano al que sirve mi Capitán General tiene ejércitos por todas partes, ejércitos que han conquistado tierras e imperios al este de aquí,

atravesando esas vastas aguas impenetrables, las mismas que cruzamos, con mucha dificultad y bajas, para llegar aquí.

LAPULAPU

No ha respondido a mi pregunta.

ENRIQUE

(se inclina levemente)

El Capitán General me compró en los mercados de esclavos de Malacca cuando era un niño, después de haber sido capturado en mi aldea por invasores del sur.

LAPULAPU

Mis hombres y yo nos hemos enfrentado a esos invasores. Desde entonces han aprendido a evitar estas aguas. □Tanto nosotros como Rajah Humabon, somos la razón por la que estos estrechos son pacíficos! (pausa) ¿Y tu madre y tu padre?

ENRIQUE

Solo recuerdo que mi padre murió en la pelea que los aldeanos mantuvieron antes de que me dejaran inconsciente. Cuando recobré la conciencia, estaba encadenado, a bordo del barco de los asaltantes. No sé si mi madre y mi hermana están vivas.

LAPULAPU

Es terrible perder a los padres a una edad tan temprana, una herida profunda que se agrava por la separación del lugar de nacimiento.

ENRIQUE

Mi hogar ahora está con el Capitán General.

LAPULAPU

¿Aunque seas su esclavo?

ENRIQUE

Para mí, es más un padre que un amo despiadado.

LAPULAPU

¿Y pelearías a su lado?

ENRIQUE

Lo haría y lo he hecho.

LAPULAPU

¡Admirable! Eres una persona que valora la fidelidad. Me gusta eso en un hombre. (Pausa)

¿Qué mensaje me traes?

ENRIQUE

Su excelencia el Capitán General desea extender la amistad y el mecenazgo del Emperador Carlos Primero, a usted y a su reino, para que todos disfruten de sus beneficios, así como de la protección imperial contra cualquiera que amenace con privarlo a usted y a Maktan de su libertad.

LAPULAPU

(Divertido) ¿Y qué debemos hacer para disfrutar de tales “beneficios”?

ENRIQUE

Reconocer la soberanía española, cuyo representante aquí es el Capitán General, abandonar la adoración de sus ídolos, luego hacer que usted y sus seguidores sean bautizados en la Fe cristiana, y dados nuevos nombres.

LAPULAPU

(se vuelve hacia Abbas)

¿Y Humabon ha hecho todo esto?

ABBAS

Así es, mi señor, junto con Rancee, la princesa Ylang y sus seguidores. El Rajah y la Rancee ahora llevan los nombres cristianos de Carlos y Juana, los mismos nombres que el rey español y su madre. La princesa ahora es Isabella. Cuando el Capitán General se vaya, Rajah Carlos servirá como virrey de la corona española.

LAPULAPU

Sin duda, Humabon debe tener buenas razones para hacer lo que hizo, aunque debo confesar que no las veo. Tal vez quiera aumentar sus dominios y riquezas a través de esta alianza aparentemente desigual. Pero, ¿por qué nos amenaza tu amo, que viene de un reino lejano?

DATU BATO

No le hemos hecho ningún daño a tu soberano, no representamos ninguna amenaza para él. No tenemos soldados en sus fronteras. Si desea comerciar, con mucho gusto lo haremos. Y entendemos que esta es la intención principal de vuestra expedición.

ABBAS

Mi Señor, esta es la costumbre, su tradición y la del imperio que representa, como sucede con todos los reinos en esa parte del mundo. Todos creen que para asegurar sus tierras, sus familias, sus riquezas, deben extender sus fronteras todo lo lejos que puedan. A sus ojos, una guerra que ocurre lejos de su casa no es una guerra. La guerra es una forma de vida para ellos. Y trae poder y riquezas al vencedor. Parece que siempre ha sido así con esa gente. Humabon cree que al someterse a un poder mayor, tanto en la tierra como en el más allá, podrá proteger y tal vez aumentar su propio poder y el de Cebú.

LAPULAPU

¿Humabon, vasallo de un señor extranjero? El mundo se ha vuelto extraño - y los cambios están ocurriendo demasiado cerca.

ENRIQUE

Es inevitable, mi señor, tan inevitable como los tifones que atacan regularmente estas islas. Su señoría Humabon sabiamente ha dejado que su cabeza lo guíe en lugar de su corazón. Yo le insisto, respetuosamente, que se una a nuestra alianza, mi Señor, tal como lo hizo el Rajah.

Usted no quiere sufrir la ira de un imperio.

LAPULAPU

Mi nombre es LapuLapu, nombre que me dieron mis amados padres, que descansen para siempre en el seno de Batalha. Siempre lo he usado con orgullo, es tan valioso para mí como mi propia piel. Amo a mi gente y ellos me aman a mí porque hago todo lo posible para servirles. Por desgracia, son tan tercos como yo. El dios que adoramos, Bathala el Magnífico, el Omnisciente, ha sido adorado por nuestros antepasados y sus antepasados.

Otros en otras tierras tienen otras creencias pero

¿acaso no miramos todos al mismo sol, al mismo cielo, pero desde lugares diferentes?

DATU BATO

En nuestro reino, dirigido por nuestro rey, somos felices y somos más que capaces de protegernos contra la tiranía de los forasteros.

LAPULAPU

No le deseamos mal a nadie, pero con mucho gusto daríamos nuestras vidas por esta tierra que amamos.

ENRIQUE

Mi señor, todos han oído hablar de sus habilidades en el campo de batalla y de la ferocidad de sus guerreros, pero, con el debido respeto, el Capitán General ha luchado contra fuerzas mucho más grandes y poderosas que las suyas. He estado a su lado y, Dios es mi testigo, nunca ha perdido. Sus barcos tienen armas poderosas, más poderosas que cualquier otra que haya visto. Y tienen capas de acero que los protegen de espadas y lanzas. Aliarse con él no es una pérdida, mi señor, sino más bien un honor.

LAPULAPU

¿Y renunciar a nuestra forma de vida?

¡Nunca!

Dile a tu Capitán General que nuestras lanzas pueden ser de bambú, pero sus puntas están afiladas y endurecidas por el fuego, y el acero de nuestro *kampilan* está templado con la sangre de todos aquellos que han tratado de interferir con nuestras vidas. Mi nombre es LapuLapu, y si debo morir para mantener mi nombre y proteger a nuestro humilde reino, ¡que así sea!

¡Ahora vete y dile a tus amos mi respuesta!

ENRIQUE / ABBAS

Su señoría.

(Enrique y Abbas hacen la reverencia y salen.)

LAPULAPU

(a Datu Bato)

¿Qué opinas?

DATU BATO

Ha hablado como un digno líder, mi señor. Nos hemos enfrentado a otras amenazas contra nuestro reino y siempre hemos logrado repelerlas. Y lo haremos de nuevo. Mi única preocupación es que Humabon, astuto como siempre, esté usando a ese extranjero para conspirar contra nosotros, y unir fuerzas con él.

LAPULAPU

Debo admitir que el barbudo y sus hombres parecen diferentes. Y es cierto que sus armas son más poderosas que cualquier otra cosa que hayamos visto.

Pueden acabar con pueblos enteros fácilmente.

DATU BATO

Son efectivas únicamente cuando se pueden usar.

LAPULAPU

¿Qué quieres decir?

DATU BATO

¿No debe estar una cobra lo bastante cerca para atacar y que su veneno funcione?

LAPULAPU

(sonríe) Veo que tienes un plan.

DATU BATO

Así es, mi Señor. Mi señor...

*(Comienza a contarle a LapuLapu su plan mientras las luces se oscurecen.)*

**Acto III, Escena 9:** en la playa. Humabon, Abbas e Ylang se encuentran ante un túmulo funerario. Ylang le coloca flores. Los tres permanecen de pie por unos momentos, la silueta de la cruz que plantó Magallanes se ve al fondo.

ABBAS

*(leyendo de un libro de oraciones)*

“No otro Dios más que Dios, y Mahoma es su Profeta.  
Serás devuelto al Conocedor de lo invisible y lo atestiguado, y Él te informará sobre lo que solía hacer. ¿Quién dará vida a los huesos mientras se desintegran? Les dará vida quien los produjo la primera vez; y Él es, de toda la creación, conocimiento. Él te restaurará, quien te hizo nacer la primera vez.  
Tal vez sea pronto.”

YLANG Y HUMABON

Inshallah!

YLANG

Que tus viajes por el otro reino, Enrique, sean felices y tranquilos, no como lo fue tu viaje terrenal.

HUMABON

Murió como un verdadero guerrero. Tu amor hacia él fue un gran consuelo.

YLANG

Adiós, viajero.

*(Mira hacia el mar suavemente)*

Nunca supe tu verdadero nombre.

*(se vuelve hacia Humabon)*

Mi señor, ¿cree que volverán?

HUMABON

Si el resto de esa tripulación maldita regresa a España, puede estar seguro de que vendrán más barcos. Ellos volverán.

YLANG

Con más cruces.

ABBAS

Más armas.

HUMABON

Más sacerdotes.

ABBAS

Más muertes.

YLANG

Al menos tenemos al padre para enseñarnos cómo piensan y cómo actúan los hombres de esa parte del mundo.

HUMABON

*(Ríe amargamente.)*

☐ Como si no supiéramos bastante!

*Luces tenues. Se enciende en el escenario a la izquierda.*

*Valderrama y Raneé Humamay están de pie de lado a lado, ante la estatua del Santo Niño, en medio de un santuario. Humamay coloca una guirnalda de flores alrededor de su cuello, luego una cáscara de coco y tortas de arroz delante. Ella y Valderrama se arrodillan.*

VALDERRAMA

In nomine patri et filii et spiritu sanctu.

*Empieza a rezar el Padrenuestro y Humamay se une a él.*

VALDERRAMA Y HUMAMAY

*(Sus voces se hacen cada vez más fuertes.)*

Pater noster, qui est in caelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum, adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem sed libera nos a malo.

☐Amen!

*Humamay cruza las manos y se inclina profundamente. Con los labios aún moviéndose en oración, Valderrama se pone de pie y hace la señal de la cruz sobre ella.*

VALDERRAMA

Quoniam tibi est regnum et potestas et Gloria in saecula saeculorum.

HUMAMAY

☐Amén!

*Las luces comienzan a apagarse, a excepción de una que está sobre el Santo Niño, y la silueta de la cruz que se asoma al fondo.*

FINIS

## **BLACK HENRY**

By Luis H. Francia  
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### CAST OF CHARACTERS

Magellan	Enrique
Rajah	Humabon Rancee Humamay
Abbas	Pigafetta
Carvalho	Barbosa
Serrano	Padre Valderrama
LapuLapu	Datu Bato
Princess Ylang	Jasmine
Kawal 1 & 2	Pedro
assorted attendants, warriors, etc.	

### SETTING

1521.

The Visayan islands of Zebu and Maktan. Action takes place in March and April.

Stage right should resemble the deck of a ship, while stage left should resemble the interior of the rajah's palace or alternatively a large hall.

Center stage should suggest a beach.

**Act I, Scene 1:** March. The island kingdom of Zebu. Rajah Humabon, Princess Ylang, and Abbas, at Humabon's palace. Humabon is in his late forties, a heavyset tattooed man, dressed in silken salawal and vest. Abbas is similarly attired and has a turban. He is in his early forties. Ylang is a beautiful 23-year-old niece of Humabon and his aide.

HUMABON

Abbas, you have encountered seafarers similar to this bearded stranger before.  
What sort of man is he?

YLANG

And how dare he not present tribute to our kingdom!

HUMABON

These are the lands and waters of Zebu, after all, not ... not of ...

ABBAS

España, Lord Humabon. I have heard of this man, and the powerful kingdom he represents.

HUMABON

Should I fear him? The Imperial Court of Cathay leaves us alone, exacts no tribute, doesn't interfere with the peaceful flow of commerce between our merchants and theirs. And his king, you say, while mighty, lives so many more leagues away than Cathay!

ABBAS

To the east, across that trackless body of water, whence the deadly storms come every year, a small group of men like the one the bearded one commands conquered the vast realm of a fearsome warrior, Montezuma they



called him. And now these men, these conquistadores, as they are known, rule Montezuma's kingdom, and Montezuma himself is dead. Consider well, your

Lordship, what course of action you will take. These are men who have conquered many kingdoms, and will stop at nothing to reign supreme in these waters. Should you come to terms with this man called Magellan, Zebu will be the better for it.

HUMABON

What drives these men?

ABBAS

What drives all such men: greed, ambition, and the belief that it is their destiny to rule over others. They also require their vassals to adopt their religious beliefs. My Islamic brothers know this for a fact—for they have fought these men—Christians, they are called. They can be defeated, and have been, by the followers of Allah, praise be to Him. For seven hundred years, the mujahideen had the kingdom of España under their rule.

HUMABON

Then why advise me to come to terms with him?

ABBAS

Two can play this game of theirs, your Lordship. Lull Magellan into thinking that you, ruler of Zebu, would be his willing ally. Learn all you can about their plans, and so be prepared for the next expedition. Or, when you have gained his trust, act while he and his ships are still in port. Bait the trap but with honey.

HUMABON

We could work, drink, and feast together, without anyone adopting anyone else's beliefs.

YLANG

The way we have always worked with merchants from Guangdong and Fukien, from Okinawa, Java and Sumatra, ...

HUMABON

... the way we've worked with you and the Kingdom of Siam. We all benefit from each other's trade without having to bow to the same gods.

ABBAS

These Christians are different, they will gladly enslave and kill in the name of their god and their king. They will stop at nothing to build a Christian empire, your lordship. Considering who Magellan is and where he comes from, you will at best be looked upon as a younger brother, at worst, as a slave who exists to serve him and his king.

HUMABON

Alipin!

ABBAS

It would be unwise to trust this man, or any of his followers.

HUMABON

I have more than tenfold the men he commands and can easily overwhelm him should I choose to. But what prevents me for the moment is Sri Lapu Lapu's continuing insistence on a share of the monies we get from our guardianship of these straits and for the use of our ports. It is an insistence that lately borders on insolence. One of these days it will cause former brothers-in-arms to turn against one another.

ABBAS

Were Sri Lapu Lapu to ally himself with the stranger against you ...

HUMABON  
A possibility I fear.

ABBAS  
Sire, are you not meeting with their chief, Magellan?

HUMABON  
Tomorrow, aboard his flagship.

ABBAS  
My lord, if you were to play the puppet, if you indicate that you and your queen might dance to their tune, perhaps they and not you can deal with the upstart lord of Maktan.

HUMABON  
You speak this man's tongue, do you not?

ABBAS  
I picked up enough of it in Malacca, where such men come to trade and to buy slaves.

YLANG  
I hear the Captain-General has his own alipin.

ABBAS  
His Christian name is Enrique of Malacca, and from reports he is treated more like a son. He speaks our tongue and will surely translate for his master.

HUMABON

Does he now? Might the Captain General have bought him in the slave markets of Malacca? I would be grateful if you could be on hand to make sure this Enrique remains faithful to what is said.

ABBAS  
At your service, your Lordship.

YLANG  
As you know, dear Uncle, the Ranee Humamay has had dreams about bearded men come to our waters bearing new ideas.

HUMABON  
I know, Ylang. She wants to find out what it is they know about crossing that bottomless gulf to the other side.

ABBAS  
I suspect the bearded one will want you and the whole of Zebu to give up your belief in Bathala, in your ancestors' ways, ways which you and your people have always held.

YLANG  
But that could be the death of us!

ABBAS  
There's no harm in listening, even as your Lordship gets to know and exploit their weaknesses.

HUMABON

I shall talk to the Ranee about this. Perhaps her curiosity could be the key to our salvation. Until the morrow then.

*(Abbas and Ylang bow, exit.)*

**Act I, Scene 3.** Palace. Rajah Humabon, Ranee Humamay, and Princess Ylang. The Ranee is in her early forties.

HUMABON

Humamay, my queen, what do you think of these strangers and the beliefs they bring from afar?

HUMAMAY

They intrigue me. Ylang has seen some of them wear this amulet around their necks.

HUMABON

Amulet? Similar to ours?

YLANG

Very different, my lord. And strange. This has a man bound to a cross, a man apparently both of this earth and of the next realm. He is called the Christ, and they believe that he is the key to entering Paradise.

HUMABON

A shaman!

YLANG

Apparently, much more than a shaman. They worship him as a god.

HUMABON

A god? Weird. But for the sake of Zebu, Ranee, would you consider adopting these strangers' beliefs?

HUMAMAY

Hmm? You have never been one for beliefs, ours or anyone else's.

HUMABON

You know me. I believe only as far as I can throw my spear. But if believing in another set of beliefs can keep our kingdom together, then I will believe, and make sure that everyone else believes.

HUMAMAY

Talking in circles—so unlike you! You would have me adopt these foreign ways but why? Are we under threat from these men?

HUMABON

Abbas knows of such men and warns me not to trust them. Indeed, I am skeptical of their motives. And their guns are more powerful than any we have seen. We need to know what really brings them here.

HUMAMAY

What would you have me do?

HUMABON

What I would have all of us do. Gain their confidence, exploit their weaknesses. Smile, even at times play the fool, and if need be, convert even as we listen.

YLANG

But my Lord, that would be unthinkable!

HUMAMAY

Give up our own beliefs? Disown Bathala? What are you saying?

HUMABON

What one holds in one's heart can never be taken away. I ask only that you and Ylang appear to our people to have taken to these new beliefs, this Christianity. Because they love and trust you, they will follow suit, and make the strangers relax their guard and give us time to do whatever needs to be done.

HUMAMAY

In other words, mislead our people?

HUMABON

Ah, my dear, only until we know for sure what these men are up to. For the sake of our kingdom, you two must act the role of willing converts. Besides, I have every confidence both of your charms will bring us quite a ways and yet not stray too far from home.

YLANG

Sire, if you think it best for our kingdom to go along with this playacting, then I will do as you wish, and conceal from these visitors my suspicions.

HUMAMAY

This playacting, once begun, could very well turn into reality and your Rancee into a true Christian monarch!

HUMABON

If that is what Fate has in store for us, so be it! Bathala na!

*Blackout*

**Act II, Scene 3:** Royal hall of Sri LapuLapu. LapuLapu and Datu Bato.  
Attendant enters.

ATTENDANT

(Bows) Representatives of the foreign captain and of Rajah Humabon are here to see you, my Lord.

LAPULAPU  
Show them in.

*(Attendant bows, leaves. Enrique and Abbas enter. They bow.)*

ENRIQUE & ABBAS  
A-Salaam aleikum!

LAPULAPU & DATU BATO  
Aleikum Salaam!

ABBAS  
My lord LapuLapu, Datu Bato, this is Enrique, aide of the chief who commands the three gunboats anchored in Zebu's harbor.

ENRIQUE  
(Bows.) My lords, may the blessings of the merciful be upon you!

LAPULAPU  
And on you!

ENRIQUE

(Bows) I have come at the behest of my Captain-General Fernando Magellan, loyal knight of the Sovereign Emperor of España, Carlos Primero, and at the behest as well of Rajah Humabon. They have a message for you, my Lord.

LAPULAPU

I see you speak our tongue. And you look like you once swam in these waters as a boy. Surely "Enrique" isn't the name you were born with?

ENRIQUE

That was many seasons ago, Sire. A different place, and a different time.

LAPULAPU

I am most curious as to how you came to be in the service of the bearded one, who I hear comes from a far-away empire, which some claim to be the greatest in the world, greater even than the mighty kingdom of Cathay.

ENRIQUE

It is, Sire. The sovereign my Captain General serves has armies everywhere, armies that have conquered lands and other empires east of here, across those vast trackless waters, the very same ones we crossed, with much difficulty and loss of life, to arrive here.

LAPULAPU

You haven't answered my question.

ENRIQUE

(bows slightly) The Captain General bought me in the slave markets of Malacca when I was but a boy, abducted from my village by raiders from the south.

LAPULAPU

My men and I have tangled with these raiders. They have learned since to avoid these waters. We, as much as Rajah Humabon, are why these straits are peaceful! (pause) And your mother and father?

ENRIQUE

I only recall my ama being killed in the fight the villagers put up before I was knocked unconscious. When I came to, I was in chains, on board the raiders' ship. I don't know if my *ina* and *ate* are alive.

LAPULAPU

It is a dreadful thing to lose one's parents at an early age, a deep wound only magnified by separation from your place of birth.

ENRIQUE

My home is with the Captain General now.

LAPULAPU

Even though you are his *alipin*?

ENRIQUE

He is more like a father to me than a ruthless taskmaster.

LAPULAPU

And you would fight at his side?

ENRIQUE

I would, and have.

LAPULAPU

Admirable! You are a person who values loyalty. I like that in a man. (Pause)  
What message do you bear for me?

ENRIQUE

His Excellency the Captain-General wishes to extend the friendship and patronage of his Emperor, Carlos Primero, to you and your kingdom, that all of you may enjoy the benefits of such friendship and patronage, as well as imperial protection against any who would threaten to deprive you and Maktan of its freedom.

LAPULAPU

(Amused) And what must we do to enjoy these "benefits," as you call them?

ENRIQUE

Acknowledge Spanish sovereignty, whose representative here is the Captain General, give up worship of your idols, then have yourself and your followers baptized into the Christian faith, and re-named.

LAPULAPU

(turns to Abbas) And Humabon has done all this?

ABBAS

He has, my Lord, along with the Ranee, Princess Ylang, and their followers. The Rajah and the Ranee now bear the Christian names of Carlos and Juana, the very same names as the Spanish sovereign and his mother. The Princess is now Isabella. Rajah Carlos, upon the Captain General's departure, will be the acting viceroy of the Spanish crown.

LAPULAPU

No doubt Humabon must have good reasons to do what he did, though I must confess I fail to see them. Perhaps he wishes to increase his dominion and his wealth through this seemingly unequal alliance. But why should your master, who comes from a distant kingdom, threaten us?

DATU BATO

We have done your sovereign no harm, pose no threat to him. We have no soldiers at his borders. If he wishes to trade, we would gladly do so. And we understand that that is the main intent of your expedition.

ABBAS

My Lord, this is the custom, the tradition, he and the empire he represents are used to, as it is with all the kingdoms in that part of the world. Each believes that to secure its own borders, their families, their wealth, they must extend their frontiers as far as they can. A war fought a long way from home is virtually no war at all, in their eyes. War is a way of life for them. And it brings power and riches to the victor. That it seems is the way it has always been with these people. Humabon believes that by submitting to the greater power, both on earth and in the unknowable beyond, he can protect and perhaps increase his own, and that of Zebu's.

LAPULAPU

Humabon the vassal of a foreign lord? The world has gotten strange—and too close for comfort.

ENRIQUE

It is inevitable, my Lord, as inevitable as the typhoons that regularly ravage these islands. His lordship Humabon has wisely let his head rather than his heart lead. I respectfully

urge you to join our alliance, my Lord, just as the Rajah did. You would not wish to bear the brunt of an empire's anger.

LAPULAPU

My name is LapuLapu, given to me by my beloved parents, may they rest forever in the bosom of Bathala. I have always worn it proudly, it is as valuable to me as my own skin. I love my people, and they love me in return, for I do my best to serve them. Unfortunately, they are as stubborn as their king. The god we worship, Bathala the Magnificent, the All-Knowing One, our forebears and their forebears worshipped. Others in other lands have other beliefs but are we not all looking at the same sun, at the same heavens, but from different places?

DATU BATO

In our kingdom, led by our king, we are content and more than capable of protecting ourselves against the tyranny of outsiders.

LAPULAPU

We wish no one ill, but we would gladly give our lives for this land we love dearly.

ENRIQUE

My lord, everyone has heard of your battle skills and the fierceness of your warriors but, with all due respect, the Captain General has fought far larger and more powerful forces than yours. I have been at his side and as God is my witness he has never lost. His ships have powerful guns, mightier than any you have ever seen. And they have coats of steel that protect them from swords and spears. It is no loss, my lord, but rather an honor to ally yourself with him.

LAPULAPU

And give up our way of life? Never! Tell your Captain General our lances may be bamboo but their tips are sharp and hardened by fire, and the steel of our *kampilan* tempered with the blood of all those who had the foolishness to interfere with our lives. My name is LapuLapu, and if I must die to keep my name and protect our humble kingdom, let it be so! Now leave and tell your masters my reply!

ENRIQUE/ABBAS

Your Lordship.

*(Enrique and Abbas bow and exit.)*

LAPULAPU

(to Datu Bato) What do you think?

DATU BATO

You spoke as a worthy leader would, my Lord. We have faced other threats to our realm but we have always managed to repel them. And we shall do so again. My only worry is that Humabon, crafty as always, is using this stranger to move against us, and may very well join forces with him.

LAPULAPU

I must admit the bearded one and his men seem different. And their guns are indeed more powerful than anything we have ever seen. They can easily wipe out whole villages.

DATU BATO

They are effective only when they can be used.

LAPULAPU

What do you mean?

DATU BATO

Must not the cobra be near enough to strike for its venom to work?

LAPULAPU

*(smiles)* I see you have a plan.

DATU BATO

I have, my Lord. My Lord ...

*He starts to tell LapuLapu his plan as the lights fade to black.*



**Act III, Scene 9:** on the beach. Humabon, Abbas, and Ylang stand before a burial cairn. Ylang places flowers on it. The three stand for a few moments, the cross Magellan had planted in the ground still there and silhouetted in the background.

ABBAS

*(reading from a prayer book)*

“There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Messenger. You will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you about what you used to do. Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated? He will give them life who produced them the first time; and He is, of all creation, knowing. He will restore you who brought you forth the first time. Perhaps it will be soon.”

YLANG AND HUMABON

Inshallah!

YLANG

May your travels in the other realm, Enrique, be as happy and tranquil as your earthly one wasn't.

HUMABON

He died a true warrior. Your love for him was a great consolation.

YLANG

Farewell, my voyager. (She looks out to sea. Softly) I never did find out your true name. (turns to Humabon) My lord, do you think they will return?

HUMABON

Should the rest of that cursed crew make it back to España, you can be sure more ships will return. They will be back.

YLANG

With more crosses.

ABBAS

More guns.

HUMABON

More priests.

ABBAS

More deaths.

YLANG

At least we have the padre to teach us about how the men from that part of the world think and act.

HUMABON

*(Laughs bitterly.)* As if we didn't know enough!

*Lights dim. Lights up on stage left. Valderrama and Raneé Humamay are standing side by side, before the statue of the Santo Niño, which sits in the middle of a shrine. She places a garland of flowers around its neck, then a coconut shell and rice cakes before it. She and Valderrama kneel.*

VALDERRAMA

In nomine patri et filii et spiritu sanctu.

*He starts to say the Lord's Prayer, and Humamay joins him.*

VALDERRAMA & HUMAMAY

*(Their voices get progressively louder.)* Pater noster, qui est in caelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum, adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem sed libera nos a malo.

Amen!

*Humamay folds her hands and bows deeply. His lips still moving in prayer, Valderrama stands up and makes the sign of the cross over her.*

VALDERRAMA

Quoniam tibi est regnum et potestas et Gloria in saecula saeculorum.

HUMAMAY

Amen!

*Lights start to fade, except for a spot on the Santo Niño, and the silhouette of the cross looming in the background.*

**FINIS**