

THE MORO-MORO: AN HISTORICAL-LITERARY STUDY

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

University of San Carlos

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Literature

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by

Fe Sala Villarica

March 1969

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The Thesis attached hereto, entitled  
"THE MORO-MORO: AN HISTORICAL-LITERARY STUDY,"  
prepared and submitted by Mrs. Fe Sala Villarica  
in partial fulfillment for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE  
is hereby accepted.

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APPROVAL SHEET

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Literature, this Thesis entitled "THE MORO-MORO: AN HISTORICAL-LITERARY STUDY," has been prepared and submitted by Mrs. Fe Sala Villarica who is hereby recommended for Oral Examination.

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Fe Sala Villarica

Cebu City  
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## CHAPTER I

### IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Through the ages, drama has always occupied an important and distinct place in man's life. It has been said that theater is in the soul of every man, and that the desire to act is innate in every one. Primitive man, dressed in animal skins, became the witch doctor, dancing wildly, giving full vent to his emotions, while the civilized Greek brought drama to its highest form of development.

As a means of entertainment, the drama holds its own very capably against other forms. In every country of the world, there is always some kind of theatrical form which appeals greatly to the people. In Spain, for example, the pageantry and excitement of the bull-fights has kept the bullfights high on the popularity list. In the Philippines, the moro-moro plays reigned undisputed for over two centuries. It is therefore imperative that some time and effort be given to a more thorough study of this literary and theatrical medium.

The second half of the 20th century has been characterized by a growing spirit of nationalism all over the world, specially in the Middle and Far East.



Egypt, India, Indonesia have severed ties with their colonial rulers, and have vociferously asserted themselves in every phase: nationalism in trade is the cry of the day; a cultural renaissance sends scholars back to musty, long-neglected archives, and anthropologists to archeological diggings--all this, to learn more about their countries' and forefathers' glorious or inglorious pasts. In the Philippines, the pitch is no less feverish. Interest in Filipino culture is growing intensely: the Filipino, a product of many cultures, is seeking his own identity, and in so doing has rightfully turned to the past. The Filipino drama is an important segment of Filipino literature and life, and the moro-moro which was the drama during the 18th and 19th centuries played an important role in our literary and cultural development.

The writer is not aware of any work which is specifically a study of the moro-moro, tracing its origin, growth, and development, its decline, and still further, its present revival. As far as the writer knows, no exhaustive study has been done on the moro-moro. There are, however, some books on Philippine literature and Philippine drama that give a bird's eye view of the moro-moro. These written records as surveyed by the writer include:

El Teatro En Filipinas by W. Retana, published in Madrid, in 1909

El Teatro Tagalo by Vicente Barrantes, published in Madrid, in 1890

The Music and Theater of the Filipino People by Raymundo Bañas, published in Manila in 1924, and

Philippine Literature from Ancient Times to the Present by Teofilo del Castillo y Tuazon, and Buenaventura Medina, Jr., published in Manila in 1964. In addition, the writer has interviewed some people, actively connected with the writing and production of moro-moro plays.

It is therefore the hope of the writer that this study will be a useful contribution in the cultural and educational fields. It is expected that this study will be of particular benefit to students or teachers by providing a deeper understanding of a theater form so popular and ingrained in the peoples' lives; to Filipino writers interested in our literary heritage, by giving them a broader literary background; to the general reading public, and even to foreigners interested in knowing more about our cultural past. It is also hoped that this study will provide valuable information for researches into Filipino life and society of the period.