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## Butbut Riddles: Form and Function

Norma N. Lua



An old Cordillera myth casts the Butbut in the villain's role of warriors who took a man's head and broke a young bride's heart.<sup>1</sup> Future myths, however, will certainly feature them as the mountain braves who drove away marauders and saved their homeland from ravishment. Thus the Butbut will have traversed two mythic epochs, their fierceness and singularity of purpose etched in a people's collective memory.

Ironically, the name *Butbut* hardly rings a bell among lowland Filipinos. What is better known is Kalinga, the name applied to all the inhabitants of the Cordillera province bearing the same name. Yet, of the more than fifty tribes that comprise the Kalinga,<sup>2</sup> the Butbut, with martyrs like Macli-ing Dulag and warrior-heroes like Pedro Dungoc<sup>3</sup> are probably the ones responsible for the secure position that the Kalinga now occupy in the emergent national consciousness.

The Butbut's prominence is rooted in their courageous struggle against the infamous Chico dam project of the mid-seventies. Since the Butbut women dismantled the campsites of the project implementors in 1974, the Butbut have been at the forefront of a people's struggle against tyranny, suffering martyrdom in the process and bearing the brunt of the untold harassment inflicted by forces determined to impose their own will. Thus, in the end, it may be said that the Chico River indeed *electrified* the rest of Luzon, and beyond too, although not in the sense that the progenitors of the project intended.

The Butbut's resistance to the proposed Chico dams should be easily understood by anyone who has been to the Butbut villages. Butbut land rises from the banks of the Chico. North of the river are the mountain areas on whose strategic slopes are found four of the five Butbut villages—Buscalan, Lokkong, Butbut Proper, and Ngibat. The fifth, Bugnay, is on a southern slope. These five villages are inhabited by more than two thousand Butbut, distributed in households that range from 55 to over

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130 per village.<sup>4</sup> They form the southern tip of Tinglayan, the southernmost municipality of Kalinga-Apayao. Oral history records that the first of these villages is Butbut Proper, whose earliest settlers were migrants from Tulgao, another village in Tinglayan. Later, the imperatives of a growing population gave rise to four other settlements.

The present-day Butbut will be quick to acknowledge that their ancestors chose their resettlement sites well. For out of these mountainsides, the Butbut were able to hew a self-contained communal life that the Chico dams would have ended. This self-contained existence is dependent on a harmonious relationship between human beings and the natural environment, a harmony intimated in the manner the *pappayao*, the rice terraces, follow the contours of the mountain slopes on which they are built.

These *pappayao* are in fact a monument to a rewarding partnership between man and nature. Irrigated by mountain springs and rivers and fertilized by sunflowers and azolla, they are revelations of how bountiful even the most forbidding aspects of nature can be when tended with patience and care. These fields usually yield two crops a year, the first harvested in June and the other in November. Supplementing these are the rootcrops, beans, and vegetables that are harvested from the *uma*, the swidden farms.

An outsider's first intimation of the Butbut's integration with their natural surroundings usually comes with his or her first glimpse of a Butbut village. The typical Butbut village is nestled against the gentle slope of a mountainside. Like the rice terraces, it obeys the contour of the mountainside, with the houses built at different levels. These levels are also terraced with stones and are reached by stone steps jutting from the terraces.

The houses themselves are products of nature's bounty and human creativity. Except for a few, they are built from materials found in the Butbut environment. A one-room structure elevated by posts, a typical Butbut house uses cogon grass for its roof, bamboo for its walls and floor, and rattan for binding. The sturdier ones have pine wood for walls and floors. Other objects from the natural surroundings also find their way into the house. Sand from the nearby river forms the foundation of the native stove, which consists of three big stones arranged in a triangle. Hanging above the stove or on the walls are bamboo and rattan baskets used in farm or household chores.

Other physical features, however, indicate a kind of integration that goes beyond a satisfactory coexistence with the natural environment. Close social relationships, for example, are suggested by the proximity of

Butbut houses to one another. No forbidding walls mark off one's yard, except for low bamboo fences intended to keep the pigs and chickens from wandering off and causing damage to a neighbor's property.

Other noticeable village features suggest a comfortable relationship with the shadowy areas of human existence. For example, whitewashed cement tombs sit right in one's frontyard. And in a conspicuous portion of the village, the *pappatay*—the sacred tree—looms large and majestic, with remnants of past rituals like pigs' earlobes enshrined in its ancient trunk. Set off as sacred territory during ritual performances, the area on which the *pappatay* stands becomes, at other times, quite a fitting site for secular activities, such as sugarcane milling in Bugnay.

This integration which seems characteristic of Butbut relationships at all levels becomes more pronounced in the nonmaterial aspects of the Butbut culture. For instance, integration in the social sphere is very evident in the three units of social organization identified by the Butbut.<sup>5</sup>

The first of these is the clan. With the family as its nucleus, the clan expands into an elaborate structure that includes past, present, and future relatives up to the third degree, including their marriage partners. A number of clans living in a well-defined territory make up an *ili* or village, the next unit. The third is the *tribo*, which is spread over five villages. These units form three concentric circles within which the individual Butbut senses an ever-expanding identity. It is an identity that carries him beyond the limited confines of self and family. Thus, the individual Butbut feels himself to be an integral part of his whole social world.

Even when the imperatives of primitive living conditions in a harsh mountain territory exact their toll on intertribal relationships, the penchant for integration still shows itself in a peace-keeping process that has been a tradition in most Cordillera villages. This is the *bodong* or *podon*. A peace treaty between two tribes, the *bodong* cements broken relationships and ensures harmony between formerly feuding groups.

The *bodong* process itself has several aspects which showcase the tendency toward integration among its participants. For example, decision-making is always by consensus, whether on the village or intertribal level.<sup>6</sup> In the process, everyone who has something to say is heard, and ideas are rehashed and refined until they become acceptable to all. When an agreement has been reached, everyone participates in the celebration, which is repeated every two or three years to keep the peace pact "warm."

One feature of the *bodong* is a good manifestation of this integrated outlook of the Butbut: the *pagta* or terms of agreement. A perusal of the

typical contents of a pagta reveals how the bodong is brought to bear on almost every aspect of village life. Expectedly, the pagta contains provisions regarding blatant offenses such as killing or theft. But it goes on to include stipulations on seemingly irrelevant subjects such as courtship and hospitality.<sup>7</sup> A closer look, however, will reveal that these “innocent” subjects are in fact potential causes of criminal acts of either commission or omission. With these inclusions, the pagta becomes a tacit expression of the view that acts are not isolated things but are rooted in certain contexts which must be addressed if such acts are to stop.

To lowlanders trained to perceive the world or human existence dichotomously, this integrated outlook is perhaps best seen in the rituals that the Butbut practice.<sup>8</sup>

One of these rituals is the *tuor*, which is performed during the planting and harvesting seasons to ensure a good harvest. The *tuor* celebration consecrates the entire village and therefore prohibits the villagers from going out and visitors from coming in. Butchered chickens are offered to the *papatay*, and men bearing spears and shields parade.

The *bales* is the revenge ritual. It involves freeing a chicken in the middle of a circle formed by the male relatives of the victim. The chicken is then struck with a *bolo*, and the relative nearest the spot where the chicken collapses assumes the task of avenging the relative's death. To find out the opportune time for the fulfilment of this task, a *pangingidew* is then performed. The clan, carrying gongs, spears, and shields, walk to a high place and divine the signs sent out by the *idew* bird.

A very common ritual is the *alisig* performed by the *mandadawak*, the native doctor. Again, this features the butchering and subsequent offering of a chicken to appease the disease-causing spirit.

The Butbut also speak of the *palanos*. This involves the bloodletting of a chicken or a pig during such occasions as the buying or selling of a precious item—a gong, a ricefield, or a work animal—or the inauguration of a new house. A *palanos* is held to prevent any untoward incident that may involve the new acquisition.

At the outset, it will be noticed that these rituals connect transcendence with mundane and day-to-day concerns. Moreover, although they clearly address the transcendent elements in human existence, each of these rituals assembles images from all facets of quotidian living. Thus, they effectively juxtapose various areas of human experience. In doing so, these rituals become indicative of the holistic outlook which perceives the interweaving of the incomprehensible or barely palpable with the concrete and the familiar.

This interweaving of the different aspects of existence in the Butbut consciousness also finds expression in the different art forms that comprise the Butbut's creative output. These forms effectively show how the Butbut outlook works out an amalgam among disparate aspects of Butbut life for an aesthetic creation.

To start with, Butbut art is wrought of materials or images from the natural environment. Most musical instruments, for example, come from the bamboo: the *saggaypo*, which gives a flute-like sound when blown, the *balding* or lip flute, and the *tongali* or nose flute. At least one dance, the *salidsid* or war dance, is reminiscent of the rooster prancing around the hen.<sup>9</sup>

Other Butbut art forms dip into other areas for their raw materials. The Butbut song, for example, is informed by sociocultural and political issues current in Butbut life.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it traverses quite a wide range of subjects: from traditions and customs that make up the traditional culture to searing political topics that preoccupy the present-day Butbut. The Butbut song, in fact, is the entire Butbut world expressed in words and music.

The integration of the different art forms with the whole of Butbut reality may be seen not only in the elements of form and content. It is also manifested in the contexts of performance. These contexts indicate that Butbut art is not simply fancy entertainment or a display of creative prowess enjoyed in isolation from the rest of the other human pursuits. Rather, Butbut art is part of the very fabric that makes up the villagers' communal life. It is integral to various social processes and derives its form and content from the dynamics involved in these processes. The war dance is a good example, but the songs offer a bolder sketch of Butbut art's derivative nature.

Without exception, the Butbut songs' contents are dictated by the occasion on which they are performed. For example, songs sung during a palanos usually become exhortations on the value of inherited property; *ullalim* chanted during a bodong invariably treat the causes of intertribal rifts even as they offer advice toward the eventual success of the peace pact. Likewise, the *salidummay* featured in community meetings speak of concerns discussed in such gatherings. Thus, the songs do not merely reflect Butbut reality—its history, culture, and social or political conditions—they are also tools for the comprehension of this reality and, as convincingly illustrated by the songs of the Chico struggle, potent exhortations for decisive action in a people's charting of their own destiny.

### Butbut Riddles: Form and Function

One other Butbut art form that displays a remarkable integration with the reality that surrounds it is the riddle or *af-af-fok*.

This integration is first seen in the subject categories covered by the riddles in this study. Of the 63 riddles collected for this study, ten deal with cosmic phenomena like thunder, lightning, rain, etc. Six have referents belonging to the local fauna; the Butbut flora is better represented with ten riddles. There are also ten riddles about the human body. Eight riddles are about personal objects. Household objects have the most number with twelve riddles. Seven deal with sundry subjects that do not fall under any of the preceding classes and are thus grouped under the miscellaneous category.

As these subject categories disclose, the Butbut riddles cover the total life of the Butbut. It will be noticed that a significant number center on objects found in the Butbut natural surroundings. A similarly large group refers to man-made things that form part of the Butbut's day-to-day existence: broom, comb, stove, etc. Several riddles speak of objects that belong to the traditional culture, such as the *pasiking*, *kalachag* (shield), G-string. But lest one forget that riddling is a living tradition among the Butbut, seven riddles become appropriate reminders. These are those that hint at the advent of new technology, or at least the knowledge of it, in the Butbut world. Among the subjects in this class are telephone, zipper and matches. Some riddles—with words like *fachi* (priest), *angel*, or *princesa*—are indicative of encroachments from the lowland colonial culture. More telling of the current dynamics of Butbut reality, however, is the presence in several riddles of disturbing images like guns and soldiers.

Their rootedness in the Butbut world notwithstanding, the Butbut riddles show affinity with those from other cultures. This affinity is immediately evident in the sound conventions adhered to in the riddles. Like their counterparts in other parts of the world, Butbut riddles may be in prose or in verse. Those that are in verse conform to certain conventions of versification. For example, some riddles employ a regular syllable count to achieve a distinctive rhythm, with seven as the most frequently used number and five a close second. In a few, conformity to this syllable count warrants the omission of initial syllables as in Riddle 61: *Affom: Gaddang kos ancho-ancho, / [A] Chipon gochas mapongto.*

Rhyme is also found in Butbut riddles. Masculine rhyme is favored, although feminine rhyme is also employed, as in *kamomoligan* / *fuligan* in Riddle 12.

Three other types of sound repetition contribute to the rhythmic fall of the lines in Butbut riddles. One is the successive repetition of words as in *orwa-orwa* of Riddle 50 and *ngato-ngato* of Riddle 4. The others are alliteration and assonance. Consider Riddle 20 for example: *Affom: Chanum kot chin ammowok, / Chipon gochas machimok*. Or Riddle 22: *Ipos chi motit, / Awitwitiwit*. Other repetitions involve not only words but also grammatical structures. The parallelism in Riddle 11 is an example: *Affom: No sumi-ad, afafa, / No tumocho, ancho*.

Undoubtedly, these different devices make the riddles hospitable to memorization and, consequently, oral transmission. But in some instances, these devices are not merely functional: rather, they assume an organic relationship with the riddle's entire meaning. Riddle 52 exemplifies this organic connection between form and content: *Affom: No lafi, tanaf, / No orgao, lungog*. (A plain at nighttime, / A hollow log in the daytime.) Note how the parallel patterns in the two lines underscore the antithesis expressed in the riddle.

The Butbut riddles also en flesh certain structural conventions found in riddles all over the world. The first thing that one notices in Butbut riddles is the presence of an introductory formula, a convention oftentimes not noted but evidently present in riddles from a good number of cultures.<sup>11</sup> In Butbut riddles, this introduction consists of a single word: *Affom*, meaning "Guess what it is."

Other conventions have to do with the meaning structure. To start with, these riddles, like their counterparts everywhere, are basically descriptions of objects. Oftentimes, these descriptions are stated in concrete terms that allude to a prominent physical attribute of the referent, as exemplified by Riddle 25, whose referent is *red pepper*: *Affom; Arne mancharachara, / Sichaem ket kumotfan*. (Guess what it is: A bleeding piece of meat, / If you eat it, it bites.) *Mancharachara* is a clear allusion to the redness of the referent.

Concretion may also be rendered by describing an action which may be attributed metaphorically to the referent as in Riddle 37: *Affom: Mangan, mangan, / Afa ta intan*. (Guess what it is: Eat and eat / Then get on my back and let's go.) The referent here, *pasiking* (native backpack), does convey, when full, a similarity to a well-fed being.

There are Butbut riddles, however, where the descriptive elements rely less on concrete suggestions than on abstractions. Riddle 46 is an example: *Affom: Orgao kad baknang, / lafi kad lumawa*. (Guess what it is: Rich during the day, / Poor at night.) The answer is *sasabbitan* (clothesline).

Already evident in the riddles discussed above is Archer Taylor's observation regarding the descriptive elements in the riddle: these elements are worded in such a way that they deliberately mislead or suggest another answer.<sup>12</sup> His analysis emphasizes an element in the riddle that is likely to mislead—the metaphor, which, according to him, the listener is made to interpret literally.<sup>13</sup>

In some riddles, however, the misleading quality lives not so much in a tricky metaphor as an intended double meaning. A good example is Riddle 36: *Affom: Mansabat kad nan chodchotan, / Siyan kapiya-an.* (Guess what it is: When these hairy things meet, / It is most pleasurable.) The mischievous glint in the eyes of the riddler will suggest to the listener an erotic thought, but the answer is quite an innocent word—*suyop* (sleep).

Other Butbut riddles mislead by using oppositional elements that express an absurdity or ambiguity.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes, this opposition involves a quality totally unexpected of the metaphorical component of the riddle. This is the case in Riddle 14, whose referent is *ilok* (mosquito): *Affom: Awad angel uwami, / komtob san lafi.* (Guess what it is: We have an angel at home / Who bites at night.) Notice that biting is an aggressive act not associated with angels. Another example is Riddle 32: *Affom: Unas Banusan, / Achi pon masaknitan.* (Guess what it is: Sugarcane of Banusan, / It cannot be harvested.) The contradiction is implied in the fact that sugarcane is meant to be harvested.

In other riddles, the contradiction involves an inherent impossibility. Such is the case in Riddle 38: *Affom: Acho-acho cha, / Ossa-an fagis cha.* (Guess what it is: They are many, / Yet they share one intestine.) Unless the listener thinks metaphorically, there is no way in which the two lines in this riddle, whose referent is *fongor* (beads), may be reconciled.

Sometimes, the absurdity expressed in the riddle lies in a violation of the logic of cause and effect, as in *Affom: Chagonamfasa, / Agilid mammamagan.* (Guess what it is: Wet during the dry season, / Dry during the wet season.) The answer is *lingot* (perspiration). Logic is also impeached in riddles involving miraculous transformations. An example is a riddle about betel chew: *Affom: Toro chan mansafsafali lomnok cha kad kampo. Ya lumawa cha kad, ossa-an cha.* (Guess what it is: They were three different things when they entered the camp. When they came out, they were only one.)

As the foregoing discussions indicate, successful riddling often lies in the clever use of appropriate metaphors whose imagery conceals as well as reveals. The riddles in this collection are ample illustrations of the dexterity with which the Butbut handle imagery and metaphor toward a successful riddle. At this stage, James Fernandez's working definition

of metaphor becomes helpful: "A metaphor is a predication upon a subject of an object from a domain to which the subject belongs only by a stretch of the imagination."<sup>15</sup>

Based on the principle of predication used, the metaphors in the Butbut riddles in this collection may be grouped into two.

In the first group, the predication is based on physical similarities between metaphor and referent. Some Butbut riddles, for example, trigger association by singling out a similarity in shape. Riddles 30 and 60 play upon the linear qualities of human legs and posts as well as of logs and roads or bridges. Riddle 12, on the other hand, makes much of the rounded shape of both stone and egg.

Other riddles hitch their metaphors to color. For example, red is shared by the image of the bleeding meat and the referent, red pepper, in Riddle 25. In Riddle 9, the blinding whiteness of the sun makes the image of a white hen appropriate. Likewise, the multicolored headband becomes suggestive of the rainbow in Riddle 5.

In other riddles, association between metaphor and subject depends on characteristic physical qualities common to both. For example, the shiny coats of flies find a conceit in the cellophane-like quality of native raincoats in Riddle 13. The angel's wings in Riddle 14 are intended to suggest a similarly endowed creature. And in Riddle 7, the nebulous density of dispersed grated coconut becomes an "objective correlative" for the Milky Way.

Many riddles base their metaphors on characteristic acts or specific ways of being identified with both metaphor and subject. Examples are Riddle 22, where the fluttering movement is characteristic of both leaves and animal tails, and Riddle 9, where flight is meant to trigger the association between hen and sun.

In the second group, the metaphors are not exclusively based on formal or physical properties. Rather, these are hinged on images whose association with the referent goes beyond pictorial similarities and which therefore come close to what Ezra Pound calls "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."<sup>16</sup> Upon examination, the riddles in this second group are revealed to rely on associations based on similarities in the feeling or atmosphere evoked by both referent and metaphor. The word "textual" becomes an appropriate term for this second group of metaphors.<sup>17</sup>

One riddle, for example, suggests the sense of isolation easily perceived in a widower but vaguely discernible in the solitary figure of the bottle in which oil is customarily kept and which is usually left in a corner. The riddle, whose referent is *lanog* (coconut oil), runs thus: *Affom:*

*Chanum as fagosipis, / Chochumangon chi fangis.* (Guess what it is: A cascade, / Guarded by a widower.)<sup>18</sup>

Barely palpable, too, is the feeling of scorn subtly interwoven in Riddle 39: *Affom: Anna toro pulo wenno afat a pulo a sorchacho we ummoy cha maarafan ad Kordilyera. Nomansubli cha ket lamang cha mangangitit.* (Guess what it is: There were 30 to 40 soldiers who went to fight in the Cordillera. When they came back, they were all black.) The answer to this riddle is *comb*, which gets dirty or black after use. It is a known fact, of course, that the soldiers, since the Chico dam controversy, have not been a favored lot among the Butbut.

Two riddles, however, imply that militarization may have taught the Butbut to appreciate one thing: the power of the gun. The unswerving, instantaneous, and far-reaching manner in which the gun pursues its target makes it an apt metaphor for the eyes, themselves powerful parts of the human body, in Riddles 28 and 29.

Emotional coloring is more pronounced in other riddles, such as Riddle 51 where the sense of the forbidden binds both metaphor and referent: *Affom: Attay chi motit, / Maid mamichit.* (Feces of the fox, / No one can pick them up.) Also permeating the riddle is a sense of fear or danger evoked by both the referent—live charcoal—and the feces of a fox.<sup>19</sup>

The apartness felt by the human being toward some aspects of the world can be discerned in the preceding riddle. This feeling is elevated to a sense of awe or wonder in the riddles that deal with natural phenomena. In some of these riddles, the referent is a beneficent product of the natural environment like rice in Riddle 26, or a source of delight like the rainbow in Riddle 5. In others, the referent is a potent natural force, like lightning in Riddle 2 and thunder in Riddle 10. The metaphors used in most of these riddles mention Kabunian, the recognized deity of the Butbut. Those which do not use Kabunian employ names which are also high in the Butbut social hierarchy as exemplified by Riddle 4 where *apo* (grandfather) is used, and Riddle 24 where a former congressman's name is mentioned.

Through the use of these metaphors, the riddles communicate the feeling of awe evoked by the amazing aspects of nature. In Riddle 9, for example, the metaphorical equivalent is between Kabunian's lighter and lightning. The irreverence in the metaphor used in Riddle 10, where Kabunian's *flatus* refers to the thunder, hardly camouflages the apparent regard for the visual display wrought by thunderbolts. In the riddle where the rainbow is Kabunian's headband, the metaphor intimates nothing about potency but nevertheless envelopes a natural phenom-

enon with mystery and majesty. It will be noticed that in these riddles, the mention of Kabunian's name is meant to quicken the listener's mind to the various referents whose exact natures are evidently still beyond the ordinary Butbut's comprehension.

The foregoing analysis of how the Butbut metaphorize various facets of their environment discloses certain characteristics of the Butbut manner of perception. The most obvious is an acute sensitivity to the different objects that constitute their environment.

This sensitivity is first of all directed at the physical attributes of these objects. It is a quality that discriminates among nuances of form and movement. But the more memorable riddles indicate a sensitivity to the emotional atmosphere that bathes the object or in which the object is normally apprehended. It is this sensitivity which sees similarities even among disparate aspects of the physical world or even among objects that belong to different categories of experience.

A second characteristic is already suggested by the manner in which images from different realms of experience interpenetrate in the riddles. Butbut perception, the riddles reveal, is integrative. It sees things in relation, not in compartments. It may indeed be said that this integrative quality is what reinforces the sensitivity which is quick to spot alignments.

The characteristics of the Butbut manner of perception disclosed in the metaphors used in the riddles bring riddling beyond the sphere of mere entertainment. At this stage, the dialogical nature of riddling is worth emphasizing. The art of riddling is obviously participatory. It calls for an interaction between riddler and potential answer-giver. To guess the correct answer, the listener is expected to work on the description presented, to see with the riddler's eyes. And even though the listener fails to name the referent correctly, the riddle is deemed successful if, after the referent is identified, the listener himself discovers the logic at work in the riddle and affirms the aptness of the answer.

What all this indicates is that the whole interactive process demands of the listener the same qualities of perception that the riddler puts into practice. In this light, the more serious tasks that riddling performs, perhaps unwittingly, in Butbut life become evident.

Clearly, riddling contributes to the sharpening of the Butbut's sensitivity to the world around them. Riddles encourage precision in imagery, the result of an enhanced capacity to observe. This sensitivity that riddling encourages transcends the physical reality of objects and extends to their emotional or tonal qualities. Thus, the keenness of percep-

tion is also directed by the riddles at the nuances produced as objects occupy positions in the sphere of interaction between human beings and their total environment.

Successful riddling, however, needs more than sharpness of observation. The employment of images from apparently unconnected spheres of reality demands of the potential answer-giver the same integrative perception that is behind the creation of every riddle. Butbut riddles force the listener to be alert to similarities and relationships, to see things in contexts other than their normal ones.

This integrated outlook encouraged by the riddles is responsible for the capacity of riddling to perform another task—that of rendering, through metaphor, the incomprehensible and the strange, comprehensible, familiar or at least manageable. In this respect, the Butbut metaphors are in the company of the best in the metaphoric tradition. This is clearly seen in such metaphoric descriptions as Kabunian's lighter for lightning, or Kabunian's lamp for the sun. The name Kabunian is clearly steeped in mystery—an allusion to the same mystery engulfing these cosmic phenomena, but a counterpoint is ably provided by the images from quotidian life. By incorporating such images, the metaphors somehow lend concreteness to the ungraspable. One riddle previously discussed may in fact be seen as an attempt to neutralize the natural phenomenon's display of awesome might, even as it humanizes the deity Kabunian, to wit: *Affom: Uttot Kabunian, / Makogway da Iuslusan*. (Flatus of Kabunian, / It jolts everyone.) In the tradition of the best metaphors, the traffic here is two-way. Both description and referent gain an added perspective from which each may be better apprehended. The same movement also figures in riddles about mundane things and less worrisome concepts. Consider Riddle 46, for example, where wealth and poverty are rendered graphically by the image of a now loaded, now empty clothesline.

The Butbut riddles, through metaphoric prediction, also perform a function which has been attributed to metaphor since Aristotle's time: the diminishment or enhancement of subjects.<sup>20</sup> The basic principle may be stated thus: "To adorn borrow metaphor from things superior, to disparage borrow from things inferior."<sup>21</sup> Subject enhancement happens in most riddles about cosmic phenomena. Here association with Kabunian or other revered personalities certainly elevates the status of these natural forces to something that approaches divinity. Subject disparagement, however, comes very subtly, at times mitigated by a jesting tone. For example, the bite in Riddle 39, where the metaphoric equivalence is between the dirty comb and the soldiers, cannot be missed, although the jesting tone somehow mitigates it.

It is mainly through this ability to move their subjects up and down the scale of group valuation that the Butbut riddles become most socially integrative. They not only help in the formation and communication of conceptions but also pass on to the rest of the group, particularly the young who delight in riddling, the attitudes and values that inform such conceptions.

All this discussion reveals that there is more to the Butbut riddles than what is apparent. The riddles, first of all, provide a relatively fair record of the Butbut's physical environment and historical conditions. They speak of the group's flora and fauna; they are good indices of the group's level of technology, providing details regarding implements and household objects. They are also indicative of the changes that are presently taking place in the Butbut's material environment.

Beyond all these, the riddles are expressive of some aspects of the group's nonmaterial culture. For one, they are revelatory of the Butbut's conceptions of the nature of things. They also communicate the group's attitudes toward these things and unravel, to a degree, some of the group's values. As expressions of the Butbut's nonmaterial culture, the riddles share with other forms of folk literature one significant function: the Butbut riddles, too, are socially integrative.

Riddling among the Butbut is a venue for social interaction. This is not only because of the occasions during which riddling takes place—community gatherings or friendly repartees during idle hours. The social sharing goes beyond the friendly exchanges or battles of wit that normally take place on such occasions. In the process of riddling, ideas are passed on to other members of the group, and certain attitudes and values are encouraged. More importantly, a manner of perceiving the world is honed.

It is perhaps because of its capacity to hone a certain manner of perception that riddling takes a significant place in the total life of the Butbut. Riddling, through its emphasis on precise description and appropriate imagery, helps maintain the Butbut's groundedness in their concrete world and immediate experience. This groundedness notwithstanding, the manner of seeing that riddling encourages is not myopic. Neither does it split the world into irreconcilable segments. Rather, it is alert to the network of relationships that makes up the totality of the Butbut's integrated existence. It relates different categories of experience to one another—the physical to the nonphysical, the unknown to the known, the new to the old. In a world of increasing fragmentation at all levels of life, this manner of perception may yet be the Butbut's best weapon for survival.

**Butbut Riddles: Texts and Translation**

The following riddles were collected during personal interviews conducted in October 1985 and February 1986 in the Butbut villages. Two research assistants, Felipe Puyao and Jimmy Cominal, also did field work from September 1986 to January 1987. The following served as informants:

1. Albino, 50, from Bugnay
2. Edward, 35, from Bugnay
3. Fallug, 56, from Butbut Proper
4. Mabini, 35, from Bugnay
5. Ngaya, 50, from Lokkong
6. Paway, 40, from Ngibat
7. Sabawil, 52, from Butbut Proper

As presented in this article, the riddles are classified according to their subjects and, within each subject category, arranged alphabetically according to their English referents.

**Cosmic Phenomena**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Affom:<br/>Tokod liblifon,<br/>Feroy nan fofokodon. (Luta)</p>                                 | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>The burial ground's post,<br/>A house that carries a load. (Earth)</p>                |
| <p>2. Affom:<br/>Pingkin Kabunian,<br/>Mamarting ka ket lamang<br/>Nan lufong mansilawan. (Ilat)</p> | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>Kabunian's lighter,<br/>When rubbed,<br/>All earth will be illumined. (Lightning)</p> |
| <p>3. Affom:<br/>Lintin Ambot,<br/>Misilaw san fulingot. (Sorag)</p>                                 | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>Ambot's flashlight<br/>Lights the dark. (Moon)</p>                                    |
| <p>4. Affom:<br/>Solkod Apo,<br/>Nifangtad ad ngato-ngato. (Ochan)</p>                               | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>Grandfather's cane<br/>Went up to the heavens. (Rain)</p>                             |
| <p>5. Affom:<br/>Antangad chak ad ngato,<br/>Anchi farangat Kabunian.<br/>(Afongan)</p>              | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>When I look up,<br/>There above is Kabunian's headband.<br/>(Rainbow)</p>             |

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>6. Affom:<br/>Attay Kabunian<br/>Chuwan sigayan.<sup>22</sup> (Gallis)</p> | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>Feces of Kabunian,<br/>Two hutsful. (Sand)</p>                              |
| <p>7. Affom:<br/>Iwagawag ko chamag,<br/>Lusan tago chinawag. (Bitowon)</p>   | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>I dispersed grated coconut.<br/>Everyone came to know about it. (Stars)</p> |
| <p>8. Affom:<br/>Silaw Kabunian,<br/>Silawan nan sangalufongan. (Init)</p>    | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>Lamp of Kabunian,<br/>It gives light to the whole world. (Sun)</p>          |
| <p>9. Affom:<br/>Manok kon fokaw<br/>Sumakyab ad Fisao. (Init)</p>            | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>My white hen<br/>Flew westward to Besao. (Sun)</p>                          |
| <p>10. Affom:<br/>Uttot Kabunian,<br/>Makogway da Iuslusan. (Kidor)</p>       | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>Flatus of Kabunian,<br/>It jolts everyone. (Thunder)</p>                    |

### The Animal World

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>11. Affom:<br/>No sumi-ad afafa,<br/>No tumocho ancho. (Aso)</p>                  | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>When it stands, it is short;<br/>When it sits, it is long. (Dog)</p>                        |
| <p>12. Affom:<br/>Bato kamomoligan,<br/>Achi pon mafuligan.<sup>23</sup> (Iflog)</p> | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>A round stone,<br/>It cannot be carried on a pole. (Egg)</p>                                |
| <p>13. Affom:<br/>Choknag ka kad foroy yo,<br/>Anna cha amfa allit.<br/>(Lingao)</p> | <p>Guess what they are:<br/>When you come home,<br/>You will find them in native raincoats.<br/>(Flies)</p>          |
| <p>14. Affom:<br/>Awad angel uwami,<br/>Komtob san lafi. (Ilok)</p>                  | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>There is an angel at home<br/>That bites at night. (Mosquito)</p>                           |
| <p>15. Affom:<br/>Mangan tufok,<br/>Umattay tufok. (Lischog)</p>                     | <p>Guess what it is:<br/>It eats with its mouth,<br/>It discharges its waste also through its<br/>mouth. (Snail)</p> |

16. Affom:  
Tago ad luta,  
Fokodana foroy na. (Dagga)

Guess what it is:  
A person on the ground,  
He carries his house on his back. (Turtle)

### The Plant World

17. Affom:  
Fafarasang amfaro,  
Ma-ottag kad fangyona,  
Achi pon makafichot.  
(Fokor nan farat)

Guess what it is:  
A beautiful lady,  
When she drops her handkerchief,  
She cannot pick it up.  
(Banana blossom)

18. Affom:  
Toro on tago,<sup>24</sup>  
Lomnok cha kad,  
Ta lumawa cha kad,  
Charag cha. (Moma)

Guess what it is:  
Three persons went in.  
When they came out,  
They were all red. (Betel chew)

19. Affom:  
Toro chan mansafsafali  
Lomnok cha kad chi kampo.  
Ya lumawa cha kad,  
Ossa-an cha. (Moma)

Guess what it is:  
They were three different things  
When they entered the camp.  
When they came out,  
They were only one. (Betel chew)

20. Affom:  
Chanum kot chin ammowok,  
Chi pon gochas machimok.  
(Chanum chi iyog)

Guess what it is:  
Water in my jar,  
It is never contaminated.  
(Coconut water)

21. Affom:  
Chanum Kabunian,  
Achi pon maissawan.  
(Chanum chi iyog)

Guess what it is:  
Water of Kabunian,  
It cannot become dirty.  
(Coconut water)

22. Affom:  
Ipos chi motit,  
Awitiwitiwit. (Tufo)

Guess what it is:  
Tail of a fox,  
Always wiggling. (Leaf)

23. Affom:  
Ummoyak sa fotod.  
Indogos ko pon,  
Ya natoy. (Dalikopkop)

Guess what it is:  
I went to the field.  
I brushed against it  
And it died. (Makahiya)

24. Affom:  
Minuraan Apo Duyan,  
Amunga kad maatta-atta-an.  
(Pinya)
- Guess what it is:  
It was planted by Apo Duyan.  
When it bore fruit, the fruit was  
filled with eyes. (Pineapple)
25. Affom:  
Arne mancharachara,  
Sichaem ket kumotfan. (Sili)
- Guess what it is:  
A bleeding piece of meat,  
If you eat it, it bites. (Red pepper)
26. Affom:  
Gallis Kabunian,  
Anna pon nan luslusan. (Bagas)
- Guess what it is:  
Sand of Kabunian,  
Everyone seeks it. (Rice)

**The Human Being: Parts and Functions and Bodily Secretions**

27. Affom:  
Foroy fachi,  
Achi pon matawili. (Enga)
- Guess what it is:  
House of a priest,  
You cannot see it. (Ears)
28. Affom:  
Fartog kon Tomchon,  
Iffon china kotton. (Ata)
- Guess what it is: My Thompson gun,  
There is no distance  
it cannot reach. (Eyes)
29. Affom:  
Chuwa on fartog kon ripli;  
Maktad san achayo on ili. (Ata)
- Guess what they are:  
My two rifles  
Can reach far villages. (Eyes)
30. Affom:  
Chuwa on tokod,  
Iffon gotok mamango. (Iki)
- Guess what they are:  
Two posts,  
Each cannot go ahead of the other. (Feet)
31. Affom:  
Lima on mansusunod,  
Mami-iso fatkong cha. (Gammat)
- Guess what they are:  
Five brothers,  
Wearing one hat. (Fingers)
32. Affom:  
Unas Banusan,  
Achi pon masaknitan. (Fook)
- Guess what it is:  
Sugarcane of Banusan,  
It cannot be harvested. (Hair)
33. Affom:  
Unas kos chupichupit,  
Chiyak pon masaknit. (Fook)
- Guess what it is:  
My sugarcane plantation,  
I cannot harvest from it. (Hair)

PHILIPPINE STUDIES

34. Affom:  
Fiffigat afat iki na.  
Mamatok chuwa iki na.  
Maschom toro iki na. (Tago)
- Guess what it is:  
In the morning it has four feet.  
At noon it has two feet.  
In the afternoon it has three feet.  
(Human being)
35. Affom:  
Chagon amfafasa.  
Agilid mammamag-an. (Lingot)
- Guess what it is:  
Wet during the dry season,  
Dry during the rainy season.  
(Perspiration)
36. Affom:  
Mansabat kad nan chodchotan,<sup>25</sup>  
Siyan kapiya-an. (Suyop)
- Guess what it is:  
When these hairy things meet,  
It is most pleasurable. (Sleep)

**Personal Possessions**

37. Affom:  
Mangan mangan,  
Afa ta intan. (Pasiking)
- Guess what it is:  
Eat and eat,  
Then get on my back and let's go.  
(Backpack)
38. Affom:  
Acho-acho cha;  
Ossa-an fagis cha. (Fongor)
- Guess what they are:  
They are many,  
Yet they share only one intestine.  
(Beads)
39. Affom:  
Anna toro pulo wenno  
Afat a pulo a sorchacho  
Wa ummoy cha maarafan  
Ad Kordilyera.  
No mansubli cha ket  
Lamang cha mangangitit. (Sagkay)
- Guess what it is:  
There were thirty to forty soldiers  
Who went to fight in the Cordillera.  
When they came back,  
They were all black. (Comb)
40. Affom:  
Ilyusok,  
Ilikwas, insilfo. (Takyad, fa-ag)
- Guess what it is:  
Brought under, wrapped around,  
Then knotted. (G-string)
41. Affom:  
Inkawikaw,  
Ya insiglot. (Takyad, fa-ag)
- Guess what it is:  
Brought around and knotted.  
(G-string)

42. Affom:  
 Payao ko usak-or,  
 Arak na pinacha-or.  
 Uray sino nga tufo,  
 Achi mafalin tumufo. (Suako)

Guess what it is:  
 My ricefield below,  
 Its irrigation has gone crazy.  
 No matter what is planted,  
 It will not grow. (Pipe)

43. Affom:  
 Okod no ognan chocho na<sup>26</sup>  
 Ya gugufat. (Kalachag)

Guess what it is:  
 You hold its breast  
 Only during war. (Shield)

44. Affom:  
 Fokodan,  
 Fokodan dika. (Sapatos)

Guess what they are:  
 You carry them,  
 They carry you. (Shoes)

### Household Objects

45. Affom:  
 Choknag ka kad foroy yo,  
 Anna lafa a fafadchong. (Sagad)

Guess what it is:  
 When you come home,  
 An ox's leg is lying down. (Broom)

46. Affom:  
 Orgao kad baknang,  
 Lafi kad tanaf. (Sasabbitan)

Guess what it is:  
 Rich in the daytime,  
 Poor at nighttime. (Clothesline)

47. Affom:  
 Choknag ka kad foroy yo,  
 Anna cha toro we negro  
 Mantotokcho. (Chorpong)

Guess what it is:  
 When you come home,  
 You will find three black men sitting.  
 (Earthen stove)

48. Affom: Toro on tago,  
 Figat on mantotokcho,  
 Ad charon sin foroy yo. (Chorpong)

Guess what it is:  
 Three persons are sitting everyday  
 Inside your house. (Earthen stove)

49. Affom:  
 Toro way tago  
 Finokod cha ossa-an.  
 Sa ossa-an finokod na kalifulifu.  
 (Chorpong, fanga, isna)

Guess what they are:  
 Three persons carried one person.  
 One person carried a thousand.  
 (Earthen stove, pot, and rice)

50. Affom:  
 Chanum on orwa-orwa,  
 Nanggagawas prinsesa. (Silaw)

Guess what it is:  
 Amidst a large body of water  
 Sits a princess. (Lamp)

PHILIPPINE STUDIES

51. Affom:  
Attay chi motit,  
Maid mamichit. (Fara)  
Guess what it is:  
Feces of a fox,  
No one can pick up. (Live charcoal)
52. Affom:  
No lafi tanaf,  
No orgao lungog. (Ofok)  
Guess what it is:  
A plain at nighttime,  
A hollow log in the daytime. (Mat)
53. Affom:  
Tago way sinkampuwan,  
Mami-iso ulo cha  
Kan ka-ancho cha. (Posporo)  
Guess what they are:  
Persons in a camp,  
They have the same heads  
And the same length. (Matches)
54. Affom:  
Chanum as fagosipis,  
Chochumangon chi fangis. (Lanog)  
Guess what it is:  
A cascade,  
Guarded by a widower. (Oil)
55. Affom:  
Choknag ka kad foroy yo,  
Anna cha mafofontog. (Talakid)<sup>27</sup>  
Guess what they are:  
When you come home,  
You will find them in single file.  
(The rattan binding of the bamboo floor)
56. Affom:  
Awad fanga os ina,  
Nibutik isbuwana. (Kafitera)  
Guess what it is:  
Mother has a jar  
That leans when it urinates. (Teapot)

**Miscellaneous**

57. Affom:  
Ginafak e farayon,  
Inollatoy Gacayon. (Langtay)  
Guess what it is:  
The tree that I cut down  
Became Gacayon's passageway. (Bridge)
58. Affom:  
Ginafak e kayo,  
Namunga pon tago. (Longon)  
Guess what it is:  
The tree that I cut down  
Had a person for its fruit. (Coffin)
59. Affom:  
Foroy ni Ana,  
Achi ka ma-aslok  
No maid sichora.<sup>28</sup> (Achilyas)  
Guess what it is:  
Ana's house,  
You cannot enter it  
Without a residence certificate. (Outhouse)
60. Affom:  
Ginafak e farayon,  
Ummoy on ad Tongrayan. (Charan)  
Guess what it is:  
The tree that I cut down,  
Went all the way to Tinglayan. (Road)



23. This refers to the customary way of carrying things in the Cordillera: the load is tied to both ends of a pole which are then made to rest on the shoulders of two men.
24. The three "persons" are the betel nut, lime, and the betel leaf.
25. The "hairy things" here are the upper and lower eyelids.
26. The "breast" refers to that portion of the shield where its handle is located and whose contour resembles a woman's breast.
27. An alternate answer is *lansa* (nails).
28. The residence certificate or *sichora* alludes to the toilet paper.

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