

# Rizal Folklore (Abstract)

MACARTHUR CORSINO<sup>o</sup>

Rizal's deportation to Dapitan in 1892 is undoubtedly the most significant historical event of the community. His outstanding contributions to the area during his four-year exile there were highly regarded, not only for their usefulness but for their novelty at the time. Among the lasting momentos of his stay are a massive earthen map of Mindanao in the plaza, the plaza arrangement itself, an improved lighting system, an aqueduct, a hemp marketing system, his medical services and his studies in ethnography, archeology, botany, and zoology.

Rural Dapitanos further admired him because despite his elite background, he displayed friendly, humble, and humanitarian attitudes. His imprint on the people's minds remains to this day in stories told and retold about his life in exile. Rizal folklore in Dapitan magnifies his role as culture hero by attributing to him

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<sup>o</sup> Mr. Corsino is editor of the *Mindanao Observer*, Dipolog, Zamboanga del Norte, and instructor in English and Philippine History at Andres Bonifacio Colleges, Dipolog. At present he is studying for a graduate degree at Silliman University, Dumaguete City.

supernatural powers. He transported himself instantaneously across rivers. Aided by a magical cane, his strength outranked that of ordinary mortals. He could turn himself into a fish, emerge untouched when weapons were hurled at him, hypnotize others, and allow them to experience visions of foreign lands. In a less supernatural vein, he could elicit ready assistance from people to realize his ambitious projects for the local welfare. Moreover, he fell in love with a Dapitan maiden, to whom he never declared his feelings.

While the better educated residents of Dapitan today try to separate fact from fiction in recording Rizal folklore, their less-educated counterparts continue to transmit these highly imaginative accounts to their neighbors. In general the populace is better informed on Rizal folktales than it is about his famous *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. This observation reemphasizes the strength and appeal of the folktale as a means of cultural expression.