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On the Relationships between Words and Melody in the Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon *Uwaging*[*]

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Revised Abstract

Singers of indigenous, long narratives in the Philippines employ a number of tunes in setting the verses. In this paper, I examine the tunes that Datu Sinuhoy Kaligunan utilized in his UWAGING performance, lasting near 11 hours, that I recorded in May 2005. Datu Sinuhoy is a Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon speaker. His tunes are named according to: (1) the non-lexical formulaic expressions, (2) the places where the tunes are perceived to originate, and (3) even individual beings—persons and spirits--from those places.

An investigation on the recording of the Pulangihon-Umayamnon uwaging performance in its entirety reveals that some tunes are related to the moods and actions of the narrative but they are not emblematic of the characters in the narrative per se as in the Palawan TULTUL. Yet, I argue that tunes are quite important in uwaging performance for they facilitate the linear grouping of words into verse units that generally consist of eight pulses (one syllable each). Like most epics in the Philippines (e.g., ULLALIM, GASUMBI, HUDHUD, KATA-KATA, ULAGING, UWAEGING), Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon uwaging has prosodic features that fit euphoniously with the tunes (e.g., the shapes of the tunes reinforce the sound parallelisms in the words). In addition, like the versions of the epic in Bukidnon, the Pulangihon-Umayamnon uwaging can be recited, MANTUKAW, minus the melody. This fact implies an important corollary that the internalization of uwaging prosody is acquired separately from the setting of words to tunes. In fact, singers internalize the prosody of the verses by reciting them from the memory of other singers' performances, attempting to intone them (with the formulaic tunes) only after they have mastered and memorized a fair amount of formulaic verses. In my fieldwork, Datu Sinuhoy dictated to my linguistic assistant a set of textual epithets forming poems called "unturan ne ngaran" (what singers call in Cebuano, the lingua franca of the place, as "tag-as nga pangalan" or "long names"). This was done separately after the complete recording of the uwaging. This evidence suggests that Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon uwaging performance entails elaborate, pre-performance compositional activities, in which singers internalize the physical [read: material] sonic qualities of the epic. These studies enable singers to produce what Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon call SAMPAH 'balance,' a local ethnopoetic concept of beauty in the voice of sung story.

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[*] Data of this paper was gathered in a fieldwork done in 2003 and 2005. The former was funded by OVCRD, UP Diliman (grant 020201 PSSH). I also wish to thank the University of Hong Kong for providing me the postdoctoral fellowship. This enabled me to write it, as well as travel to Palawan where this was presented at the 10th International Conference of the Austronesian Linguistics, January 17-20, 2006. I also wish to thank Dr. Nicole Revel, to Albert Vamenta and his family, Margarita Cembrano, Fr. Matt Sanchez, SJ, Enjilyn Balanban, and Irene Saway-Llesis. They all facilitated my stay in Cagayan de Oro City and in Bukidnon province. Maraming salamat po!

I. Introduction

The epic song genre ULAHING, UWAGING, UWÆGING (UWEGING) 'sung epic narrative' (or alternately named after its main hero AGYU) among the indigenous peoples of Central Mindanao occupies an important place in the scholarship on Austronesian epics in the Philippines. This song tradition was one of the first epic genres to be systematically studied (e.g., Manuel, Maquiso) and it has continuously attracted the attention of researchers (e.g., Saway-Llesis, Cembrano, Saway). Unfortunately, most of uwaging studies done thus far have focused on its text or, if not, have explored it in its ethnographic particularities. Recent works, however, show signs of exploring sung narratives as ethnopoetic objects, revealing an interdisciplinary approach (e.g., see Revel 2003). In this paper, I explore epic song performance from the said perspective, particularly investigating the materiality or physicality of song as performance. In epic song performance, a sonorous voice projects words to emplot a story. As an ethnomusicologist, I discuss this dimension mainly in terms of music. Thus, I explore uwaging epic song for its sound qualities and rhythmic articulations, which plenitude—I am nonetheless aware—cannot be fully regained on letters and notes printed on paper or projected on a screen.[1]

The music of epic songs requires a separate treatment. Unlike everyday speech genres, epic song demands a musicological technique of analysis. This is obviously because song has a tune or melody and rhythm that are quite different from the aspects of "intonation" and rhythm of speech or prose. In this paper, I explore how melody interacts with words in song and how such interaction conveys a narrative that is not only sensible mentally, but more importantly also bodily palpable. My material comes from the voice of a Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon storyteller whose complete uwaging

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[1] In the literature, a few music transcriptions of epic songs in the Philippines are available on print. In one of the inaugural issues of the Journal of the Society for ethnomusicology, for example, the late José Maceda, the most important catalyst in the development of ethnomusicological studies in the Philippines, transcribed and analyzed an excerpt entitled "Nan Dong-aw" of a ballad, a semi-epic song, in the Sagada Mountain Province. His transcription and analysis were purely descriptive and used "etic" parameters. But they contain some valuable information such as his observation that verse lines of song are made up of seven syllables, but realized musically as eight beats, with an additional particle tagged at the end of lines (Maceda 1958:47). Another early music analysis of epic song in the Philippines can be found on pages 77-84 of Francisco Billiet and Francis Lambrecht's The Kalinga Ullalim. The authors analyzed a prototypical rendition of two stanzas entitled "The Birth of Banna" from the ullalim chant. Although Billiet-Lambrecht's music transcription is unreliable, their discussion of the protracted GAYONG-ONG syllable that occurs in most verse lines is suggestive of the musical prosodic meter. Ethnomusicologist Felicidad Prudente did a more substantial music analysis of epic singing. She wrote a dissertation (1984) on the musical process of the Northern Kalingga gasumbi epic. In her work, Prudente analyzed the four GALOY 'tunes' of the epic and showed how they operate as "constraints" in the patterning of "pitch, contour, rhythm and duration of a given melody and in the verse length, rhyme, metrical scheme and plot" (104). This musical patterning is a fundamental characteristic of many epic song traditions in the Philippines. Nicole Revel did a more recent work, in collaboration with Olivier Tourny. Revel and Tourny presented a generalized music analysis of two musically divergent epic genres: the Ifugao hud-hud, in which verses are sung alternately between a soloist and a chorus and in which music has no general correlation to the story, and the Sama kata-kata, which is sung solo and in which music supports the mood of the narration. While the regulation of words of the epic into lines having more or less equal number of syllables in more normative, another epic song tradition, that of the Palawan TULTUL does not. This can be seen in Jose Maceda's transcription on page 40-42 of Nicole Revel's book Kudaman.

performance I documented in May 2005.[2] At present, this genre is still being extensively practiced in the area where Datu Sinuhoy had lived.

Plate 1: Datu Sinuhoy Kaligunan,
the Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon Singer of Tales



The poeisis of producing what the Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon term SAMPAH 'aptness, balance, harmony' governs the relationships between words and melody in uwaging performance. During my field research, one of my informants, uttered the following example--a couplet--in an attempt to describe to me what sampah is, i.e., it is

"Mabalobag sud-ungon
Makompot libay-awon"

Utilizing the logic of the concrete, my informant defined it, not by supplementing more words to words, but by mimetically reproducing what sampah is by way of a physical embodiment, thus doing a poeisis of the concept itself herself. She created a poem that IS the sampah. Semantically, the couplet means "beautiful to contemplate upon." Physically or materially, and this is the aspect of analysis that I will be focusing in this paper, sampah refers to the parallelism of words, in which sound and meaning conspire to make [read: poeisis] a euphonious verbal expression. Thus, I ask the basic question: How does melody and rhythm produce such poetic effect of balance and symmetry in the words of uwaging?

To answer this, I will inspect closely the aesthetic style of Datu Sinuhoy's PERFORMED uwaging, as well as two related materials that have not been considered in the literature about uwaging thus far. I refer to the LAGONG 'tune' formulas and the UNTURAN NA NGARAN 'long names.' These are poems meant for recitation to oneself as a study, describing the qualities of the main characters of the narrative. These two materials exhibit the same attributes of sampah in real performance, which mastery

[2] Datu Sinuhoy is also a leader (datu) and a ritualist (though he heals not by means of personal spiritguides, but through the use of medicinal plants). He unfortunately died of an illness a few months after I recorded him in May 2005.

however can only be legitimated by the ability to sing a song that lasts for hours.[3] In the second section, I investigate the nature of the tune formulas. Then, in the third section, I explore how they are used in the actual context of spontaneously enunciating the words and constructing the narrative. Words in uwaging performance are "measured" into grouping of eight syllables and the tunes are functional for they facilitate the measurement or regulation of words into verse lines. In the fourth section, I discuss the characteristics of the poems of long names, which—as I just said--are independently composed. Because verses in these poems are not "formulas" per se as the tunes are, the extraneous role of the poems vis-à-vis the issue on composition and improvisation had compelled me to assess its status. I posit that these poems form an evidence that outside the uwaging performance proper, the singer engages in compositional studies by himself and thus internalize the technique to construct verses in a balanced complementary enunciation. If the symmetry of tunes help the singer construct the regulated lines of eight syllables, then the poems facilitate the acquisition of handling the flow of sonic parallelisms.

II. The tune-formulae of Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon uwaging

Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon uwaging can either be MANTUKAW 'recited' or sung. My recording of uwaging in May 2005 shows that the mantukaw style was performed only towards the end of the rendition for a practical reason: the singer was already tired and had lost the stamina to recite the remaining uwaging. SUNG uwaging is therefore normative. And already mentioned, it is generated from a set of tune-formulas that this section will describe in details.

Singers of uwaging possess a number of these tune-formulas. The number varies according to expertise and they are acquired from different singers with whom the neophyte comes to associate with in life. These tune-formulas are specific to the uwaging and they cannot be used to intone words of SALA and LIMBAY 'short non-deigetic songs', nor of the ritual songs in the KALIGA-ON 'religious ceremony.' These other song genres utilize different sets of tunes. Nonetheless, it shall be demonstrated that all the Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon types of song, including the uwaging, share the same music compositional process.

Uwaging tunes are distinct from the other tunes for uwaging tunes are perceived to embody the quality of hardness. One cannot miss this vigorous sonority even in a passive listening to it; the robust physicality and energy of the voice in song is obvious. Forceful rhythmic attacks in uwaging are similar to that of the DASANG 'oratory or boasting (?).' Both are songs of masculinity. Uwaging is about cultural heroes, the BAGANI 'warriors'. Not only does uwaging differentiate from the limbay in terms of presence or absence of narration (deigesis), limbay is also considered more "feminine"; it is enacts the disclosure of emotions and thoughts in song similar to the TUD-OM 'ritual song' of downstream Umayam River Manobos in Agusan Valley (which is associated with the ritual cure of the sick). [4]

[3] These two materials—tune formulae and adjunct poems—have not been paid attention to in previous studies.

[4]Bukidnon limbay and sala are similar to the tud-om among the IPs in downstream Umayam River. See Buenconsejo*, Songs and Gifts at the Frontier*.

In two week-long visits to the foot of Pantaron Mountain range in 2003 and 2005, I was able to record twelve tune-formulas from Datu Sinuhoy.[5] These tunes are found in Appendix A for reference. In 2003, he sang only seven formulae. But in 2005, he sang 12. Presumably, Datu Sinuhoy remembered the tunes better in 2005 as they were recorded in an interview after the complete performance of his uwaging.

An inspection of the names of the tunes that Datu Sinuhoy sang to me reveals that six are termed according to the words the tunes are set (don don; dingko; hondaw; onin; aninaw-aw, and ongkakak);[6] three are attributed to groups of people (Pulangihon, Liliwanon, Tagolowanon); and three are attributed to individual persons and spirits such as Manlogtanon (the person who taught uwaging), Spirit of Uwaging, and Spirit from Mambalakan Mountain. In my conversation with the singer after the singing, Datu Sinuhoy singled out aninaw-naw as his personal voice. However, cross-checking his statement with another informant in December 2005 indicates that Datu Sinuhoy's aninaw-aw voice is actually just a mimesis of the voice of Bulindahan, a real person, who was a famous uwaging singer in the past. The multiplicity of the origins of Datu Sinuhoy's tunes thus suggests an individual life history that "writes" his own self's relationships to his various others. These others have voices, their sonic signatures, and Datu Sinuhoy inscribes them into his own. Tagolowanon was learned from his wife's family who come from a place drained by Tagolowan River. Datu Sinuhoy himself is born of a mixed Pulangihon-Umayamnon ancestry; his voice is multiple.

Looking into the tune-formulas, one notices that they are of varying lengths. The variation is not significant. What is crucial instead is that each formula is characterized by a clear melodic contour and that it delineates a distinctive rhythmic profile. Their anatomies are well formed and each formula represents, in miniscule, the general sonic aesthetic principle of balance and symmetry. This aesthetics is embodied in the indigenous concept of sampah.

Tune-formulas can be classified according to whether it is metered or not, the latter being more predominant. Of the 12 tunes known from Datu Sinuhoy, only two are metered musically, namely: Pulangihon and Manlogtanon. Both are in duple time and they are quite different in musical style from the non-metered ones. The metered tunes do not have a complex phrase structure. They simply divide the line of words into two symmetrical halves. In fact, Manlogtanon is a tune for beginners, which has a "sing-song," alternating the movement of one-measure melodic cells as if engaged in some kind of a "question-answer" dialogue.

[5] Most tune-formulas were recorded in both visits, but there are a few that were sang only in either year

[6] Ongkakak is a special tune sung as an interpolation to the main narrative. This is usually done during funeral wakes.

Figure 1: The manlogtanon tune for beginners

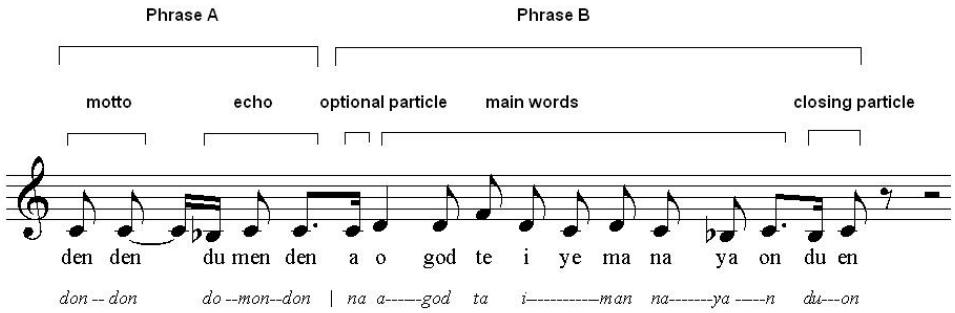


The non-metered tunes, which are of greater aesthetic interest, are cognized mainly for the initial melodic phrase from whose words the tune formulae are named. Though culture-bearers are clear about the independence of words from tunes, these words form an intrinsic part of the tune for they support the overall quality of the harmoniously strung sound-words. That is, tunes have variegated vocal sonorities that convey specific aesthetic qualities, distinguishing one tune from the other. The vowel /e/ for example has been singled out; it is perceived to have a melancholic quality.

Overall phrase structure of the tunes is bipartite and this structure occurs in two levels. At the lower level, it begins with the first sub phrase or melodic cell I call "MOTTO" and this is complemented with the second sub phrase or melodic cell that I call "ECHO." The latter sonically resembles the first. The motto is often distinguished from the echo because the former is non-lexical. An echo may or may not be lexical. If it is lexical, then it is constituted as an idiomatic expression such as "iyan en man duen," "iyan man daan," etc.

Below is the famous "dondon dumondon" tune formula. The tune is very popular in this region and is not specific to the group I visited in 2003 and 2005. It is universal among all the ethnic groups who live on and around Mount Pantaron range. In fact, I was already aware of this tune when I did fieldwork as far downstream among the Agusan Manobos in Loreto, Agusan del Sur in 1996 and 1997. The tune begins with the motto sub phrase made up of non-lexical words "don don." It is then followed by the ludic echo "domondon," which "repeats" in an altered form the sequence of the vocal sonorities of /o/ and /n/ of the preceding "motto" sub phrase. The linear combination of motto and echo comprises the whole Phrase A. "Don don domondon" is balanced itself for one unit is "complemented" with a succeeding sub phrase. The latter "plays" around with the vocal sounds of the motto.

Figure 2: The dondon tune-formula

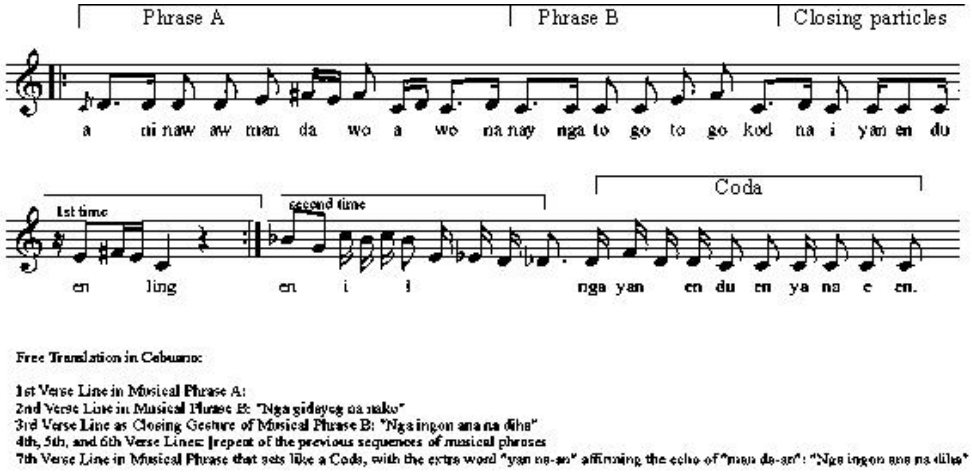


At a higher structural level, Phrase A (motto + echo) is followed by Phrase B. This contains the "main text" of the formula. A close inspection of the words in all Phrase B's of the 12 tune-formulae (see the list of tune formulae in the Appendix where I have marked the structural parts of the tunes) manifests that Phrase B's contain words that one would call "idiomatic expressions." Hence they are also formulaic, textually speaking. In addition, Phrase B varies in length, but the attempt to balance phrases is always a strong constraint. In the 2003 variant of tune formula onin-onin (see Figure 3 below)--a tune that is specifically associated with the Umayamnon (i.e., people living near the interior headwaters of Umayam River Upstream)--three phrases follow the first. This repetition behooves the articulation of a longer melismatic cadence so as to balance the elaborated second phrase. The need to "counteract" (and perhaps this is the literal gloss of sampah) preceding phrases is therefore clear. This is what we see again in the 2005 Aninaw-aw variant. In Figure 4 below, the first and second phrases are repeated, prompting the elaborate cadence, some kind of a coda, that symmetrically counters the weight of the preceding phrases.

Figure 3: The 2003 variant of onin-onin in which three phrase b's follow the intoning phrase a



Figure 4: The 2005 variant of ani-aw-aw showing the elaborated second phrase that balances the previous phrase



Within Phrase B, words are bounded at both sides by particles that may or may not carry a semantic meaning. The particle (e.g., "na" or "aw") that connects Phrase B from Phrase A can be construed as a linker and I observe that this is optional. This contrasts with the closing particle which is more necessary for the sounds of the closing particles rhyme gives a sonic sampah to that of Phrase A, bringing in a more euphonious cadence. The linking and closing particles are therefore also important. As just said, they function to close the second phrase with a vocal sonority that is like an echo of a sound heard previously. And, and I will have more to say on this function in the next section, these particles also function as fillers in the verse so that singers can construct the desired equalization of verse lengths.

The particle linking Phrase A and B rhythmically propels the flow of lexical words of Phrase B. Syllables in this phrase are articulated either (1) with unequal duration thus producing a "rhythm" or (2) with equal duration. The latter style is called "TINAGINHOS." Here, rhythm is obliterated, though the melodic contour is left intact. Phrases B, with numbered syllables, as in that in Figure 6 of the next section, illustrate the first style of intoning Phrase B. Below is the tinaginhos style. As it shall be shown in the next section, tinaginhos can bring the mood of narration to one of "busy-ness." In the next section, I will argue that the tinaginhos style is affected by a factor that lies outside of music—the narrative.

Figure 5: The tinaginhos style in phrase b



III. The tune-formulae in the context of words and narrative

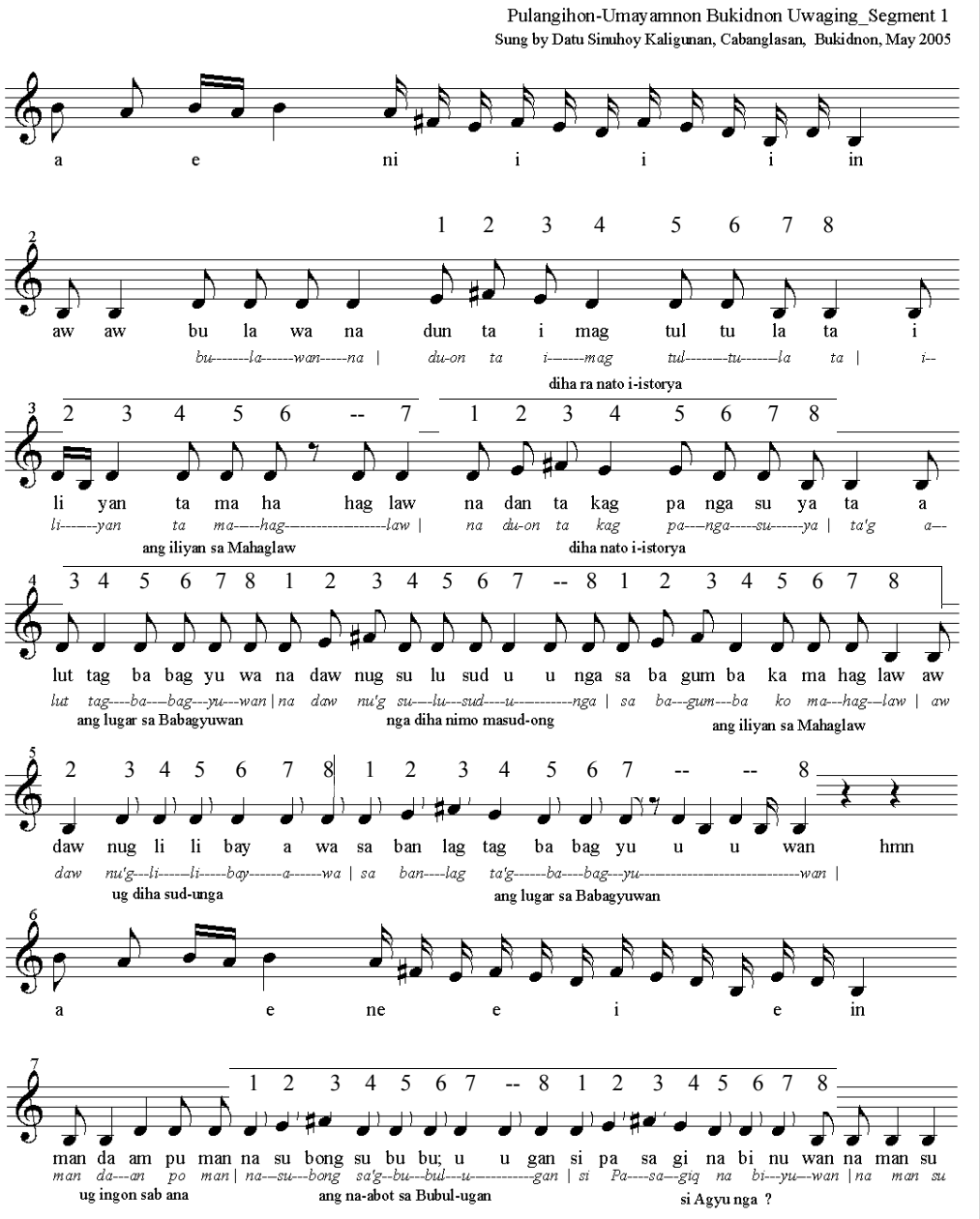
Uwaging performance is sung almost entirely in a syllabic style, i.e., one syllable is set to one note. Not only does this style make the words intelligible (i.e., as a genre of communication, the style makes sense; after all, why tell a story when words are garbled?), it is also an effect of the singer's attempt to "measure" the length of a group of words and hence create the verse lines. "Measuring" the linear flow of words is an important governing principle of the aesthetics behind uwaging composition. Lines set to music contain seven to nine syllables, with eight being the most common. The verse lines are therefore "metered," i.e., "meter" as a prosodic concept. Syllables in the lines receive one "pulse" each. Figure 6 below demonstrates this principle. There are two strophes in the example under scrutiny, each introduced or marked by the motto-followed-by-echo as discussed above. After the phrase "aw aw bulawan na" (the echo sub-phrase), Datu Sinuhoy consistently sings the rest of the text in syllabic style. The eighth syllable is aimed at, similar to the punctuating gong at the ends of four counts in Southeast Asian ensemble music. The rhythmic pull to the ending note at the eighth pulse is obvious given the interruption of the penultimate syllable. This gesture prepares the way to the 8th pulse. Take the verse "iliyan ta mahaglaw" in Figure 6 as example. As written, it is only made up of seven syllables. In performance, the musical phrase spans eight pulses and a momentum is felt, pulling the preceding syllables to the last of the line. Unmistakably, this makes the eight beat the goal of the linear flow of syllables.[7] The syllable /-ha-/--which comes after a breath--makes sure that this penultimate syllables leads to the most important pulse, the 8th. Numerous instances in the said example confirm this observation. I list those that occur in the music example under investigation.

System 5, line "sa banlag tag babagyu -- wan" [here the pull of the 8th is made more glaring with the brief undulating melodic gesture.
System 9, "si dasag na binu bu – ngan"
System 11, line "si nilarawan na gim – ba"
System 13, line "si linadjaw na bula – wan"

[7] Compare this with the material that Jose Maceda analyzed.

System 15, line “ni dalamanan mayum – ba”

Figure 6: An uwaging excerpt (beginning) showing the musically regulated 8-syllable versification

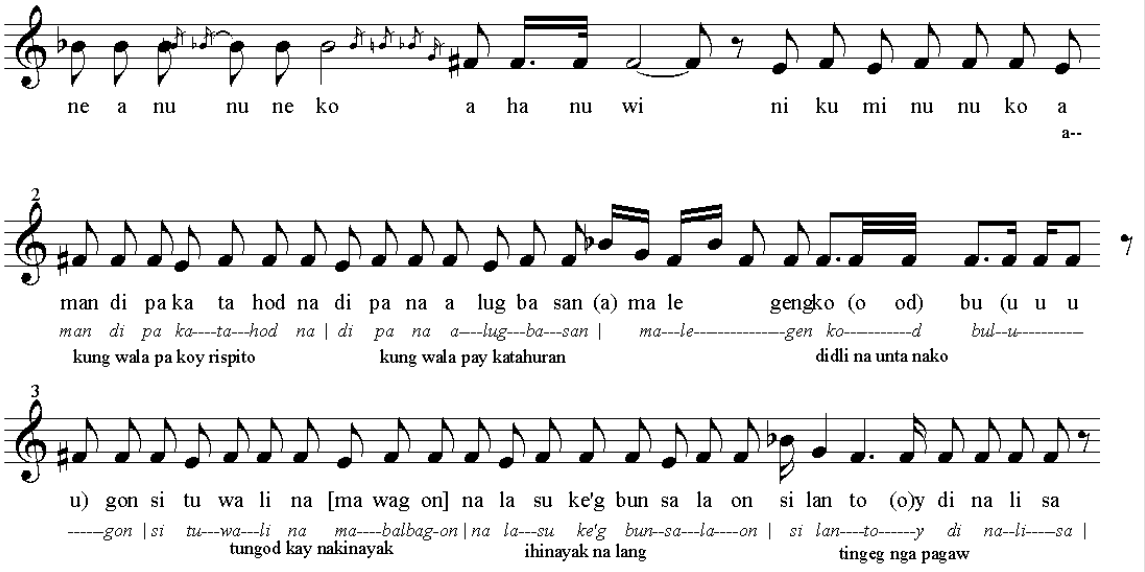


Indeed, the ability to create lines consistently into eight syllable-pulses is remarkable. In the articulation of lines using the dondon tune (see Figure 9), the equalization of lines that are unequal in number of syllables is clear (see the italiced lines in the music example below, which range from 6 to 9 syllables). In performance, each line is preceded with the six-syllabled motto sub phrase of the dondon tune formula, which is then followed by the regulated text of equal numbered syllables, ending with the closing particle “du-on,” which rhymes with the motto. The main text is thus “sandwiched” between the two melodic tags with linguistic particles. As shown in Figure 9 below, the ending of Phrase B’s are conjoined to the ending melodic tag. In the

example, I count the syllables in each line as nine because of this. In system 3 of Figure 9, the syllable count is ten and that's because I count the syllable /u/, which can be construed as part of syllable 2. The music in Figure is only a small segment of a very long section in which the words are set to the same dondon tune.

In terms of musical process, the alternation of Phrase A and Phrase B in uwaging is similar to that of other song types such as limbay/sala. One can extend this musical process to other musics in the Philippines, which are also generated from the same general musical procedure. Figure 7 is an excerpt of the limbay using a tune called ano-anoq. Like the setting of uwaging words, the piece begins with a phrase that contains the motto followed by the idiomatic formula "ni ku minunu ko." Then, this "Phrase A" is followed by the syllabic Phrase B's. In the ano-noq tune, the small melodic intervals, contour, rhythm and color all convey the feeling of "difficulty," i.e., the tune is iconic of the words of the song. Later in the song, there are touches of pathos that transgress the syllabicity of Phrase B's with melisma. Notice the setting of the words "dili na unta nako." The melismas that articulate such words are rhetorical. They project mimetically the song's message.

Figure 7: The ano-noq tune, limbay song type



Going back to the uwaging material, in the absence of the transcription of the complete text and music of the uwaging performance, it is not possible to state with absolutely certainty which tunes go with what moods that the singer-narrator expresses as he emplots the story in time. Nonetheless, given the first hour of performance which music I was able to transcribe, there is, in all likelihood, some general correspondence between music and narrative. The narrator seems aware of the moods attached to his description of the characters in action, so that his musical deliveries co-vary with those moods, thanks to the different identities of the tunes.

Below is a table listing down the sequence of the tune changes from beginning to the first hour of the performance.[8]

Table 1: Sequence of tunes within the first hour of the uwaging performance

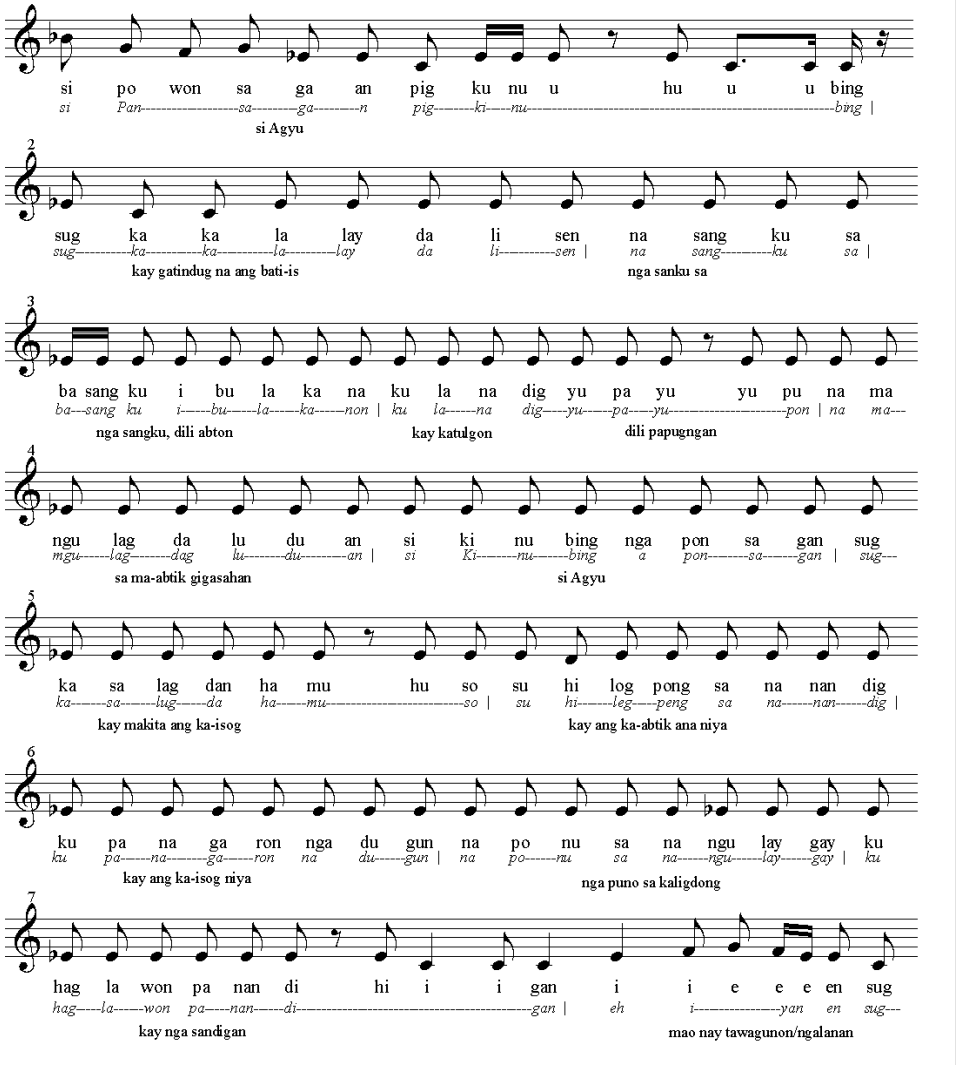
Segment	*Tune Used*	*Event:* The narrator…
1	Voice of the spirit of uwaging	Addresses the audience that he's going to tell a story about the place called Babagyuwan where a fort reached by Agyu can be found. Narrator tells the audience to contemplate on this fort which is a metaphor for Agyu
2	Same as previous, but with a change in phrase B to the tinaginhos style	Describes the strength of Agyu who is to be depended upon
3	Pulangihon	Tells the audience that he's going to change his story, but still describing the strength of Agyu
4	Same as previous but with slight alterations in the meter	Describes the seashore as a road lit by the moon
5	Don don	Describes the meeting of brave heroes
6	Voice of the spirit of song	Describes and contemplates on the beauty of the plant called kadlum, which is a symbol of the Agyu's countenance.
7	Voice of the spirit of song with phrase B in the tinaginhos style	Describes the objects of scissors and mirror that are associated with
8	Pulangihon	Describes Kindangon, who is also strong and mysterious
9	Tinaginhos	Describes (1) the view of fort from another side and how this has been decorated and (2) Kindangon climbing the stairs
10	Voice of the spirit of the song	Describes the top of the fort where Kindangon is relaxing.
14	Tinaginhos	Describes the difficulty of the seashore, the road along the sea filled with bamboos

In the first change, labeled segment 2 in the table, when the singer describes Agyu's action of standing up (second system of Figure 8 below), he immediately shifts Phrase B to the tinaginhos style. Listening to the recording, the effect is very obvious; it is

[8] Due to time limitation, I was not able to transcribe the entire song composition, which—as mentioned--amounted to near 11 hours. The complete rendition was done in three installments within two days and one night. Only the first 30 minutes of the text have been transcribed so far. The segments in which the tunes change have been transcribed by the author, with the assistance of Enjilyn Balanban who also translated the text transcription from the original Pulangihon-Umayamnon to Visayan-Cebuano, the author's first language. The author all transcribed the music himself.

dramatic. Thus, from a more detached description of the preceding section, the narrator marks his excitement about Agyu's strength, transforming his description from a passive into a more active narratological engagement. Thus, the sound-sense of busy-ness is projected, syllables are hurried, and tension builds up.

Figure 8: The first tune change indicating the mood that anticipates build up of narrative



Just consider other instances in the table above where the tinaginhos style is also sung. See segments seven, nine, and fourteen of the Table. These segments also depict the mood of anticipation or suspense. They contrast with the segments sung to the tune of the spirit of song, which are more reflective and inert. The initial tinaginhos build-up in segment 2 leads to the Pulangihon tune (segments 3 and 4). This becomes more and more vigorous and rhythmic, until the dondon tune springs. This last tune is a musical plateau in which words and music meet to create an ecstatic repetition of rhythmic vocal colors.

Figure 9: The absolutely rhythmical dondon tune in actual performance



IV. On composition and improvisation

Uwaging is not taught individually and formally for there are no guilds of teachers and students among these mountain people. Yet, singing is considered a rare and admirable specialization and though almost anyone in the area visited can sing a minute or two of the genre or a sala that acts as a prelude to the epic song,[9] there are only very few who could actually spin a narrative in song that lasts for hours.[10] Uwaging is therefore learned bodily or through consistent listening of voices in actual performances. Singers simply learn the uwaging by imitation, albeit a lore behind its acquisition explains it obliquely. Parallel to the incorporation of voices from spirits in the genre tud-

[9] The invocatory prelude, which is a sala song type, is called panasaraq-sara. This can also be inserted elsewhere in the epic song as in my documentation when an audience sang a sala voluntarily. In that sala, he addressed the spirit of the voice to let Datu Sinuhoy continue singing and therefore complete the performance, as Datu Sinuhoy was then tired and exhausted.

[10] Just a few days before I documented the complete uwaging under study in the paper, Datu Sinuhoy said to me that he sang the epic for four nights in a neighboring hamlet where his indigenous medical knowledge was sought.

om (that I had studied among the Agusan Manobos in downstream Umayam river), the ability to sing is legitimated by a belief that the artistic impulse was gifted by a supernatural being in a distant place of enchantment. This inspiration applies to the learning of dance as well.

In an interview with Datu Sinuhoy, however, he explained to me why he is able to sing, not because of the mysterious gift of poetic eloquence from spirits, but as a technique he achieved through the years. He disclosed that one truly studies the art of singing, admitting that it took him a long time to master the skill to set the tune-formulas to the text, particularly that of his favorite tune, the voice of the spirit of the uwaging. It is most likely that this tune is his signature voice. He alone can sing it for it has no name.

The making of poems that are adjunct or extra to the song performance corroborates the notion that technical skill develops out of compositional studies. Datu Sinuhoy dictated a clear proof of these studies, in the material composition of poems, to my linguistic assistant and research associate, herself a native from the area. The poems are called "unturan ne ngadan" (or "long names"). They are about the main characters of the epic, namely: Banlak, Agyu, Bataay, Peno-ena, Lena, Yugong, and Kindangon.

Plate 2: Datu Sinuhoy dictating the poems of long names



Photo by Charles Buenconsejo

Below is an excerpt (first six lines) of the poem about Agyu. It describes Agyu's heroic character, comparing him to the waves of the sea. Unlike the actual performance which verses span eight syllables (due to the interpolated syllables), lines in this excerpt are metered by seven syllables each. This is surely the SPOKEN VERSION. Eight is the sung version because particles accommodate the balancing of musical phrases.

Table 2: Sound parallelisms in an excerpt from a poem of long name

In Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon	In Visayan-Cebuano
	1. Nagpalawod, Nagpaila
	2. Si Agyu nga samag dagat
	3. Nagpaila sa kabangis



4. Nagpalawod sa kahiladman

5. Nakisabay sa balod

6. Nakig-away gyud

In the excerpt of the poem about Agyu, words follow one another in a flow of contiguous similar-sounding sounds. It is important to note that these crisscross each other UNPREDICTABLY. It is not possible to scan the lines for a neat number of feet and groupings of syllables according to stresses as found in Indo-European meters, especially those English poems. Again, the relevant meter used in uwaging is SYLLABIC METER, not syllable-stress meter nor strong-stress meter nor quantitative meter.[11] In the Agyu poem, sonic cohesion is achieved by (1) the pure repetition—echoing of words—such as "lumawon lumalanday" (boxed in the table above), (2) vowel assonances, and (3) alliterations among verses that are contiguous each other. As just said, this characteristic results from verses not organized according to the three other meters just mentioned. The immediate repetition of the syllable /-dag/ in line two is typical. I observed this in many instances in the actual singing. For example, using the excerpt discussed above (see system 4 of Figure 6), the interpolation of the nonlexical "aw daw" after the saying of the verse "sa bagumba ka mahaglaw" can be anything but a matter of sound resemblances.

A comparison of the lines in these poems and the words of the actual uwaging performance that have been transcribed so far thus reveals that lines in the poems do not recur in performance and hence cannot be construed as "formulas" as the tunes mentioned in the second section of this paper are. Rather, I argue that these poems are evidence of compositional activities that a singer engage with as he learns to sing uwaging. In the poems, one learns (1) to construct 7-syllabled verses, (2) develop the skill to elaborate on a description of a character and his actions, and (3), of course, acquire the important technique to string verses that are pleasant to listen to.

The ability of construct the measured lines of seven syllables each is therefore learned independently from the competency to set words to music. Pulangihon-Umayamnon speakers explicitly recognize the tune Manlogtanon (see transcription above), which serves this very purpose. The tune itself is metered and its bipartite structure with its symmetrical melodic contour can easily fit to the verse.

The feel for sound parallelisms is more apparent in the spoken delivery mantukaw of uwaging. The excerpt below shows the same unpredictable flow of more-or-less contiguous sounding words. Mantukaw is delivered in a rapid articulation of words with stresses--ranging from two to three per line—marking an irresistible rhythmic flow. Unlike the sung style in which non-lexical particles are inserted to make lines of eight

[11] For a general introduction to types of prosodic meters, see "Prosody" in Encyclopedia Britannica.

syllables, the length of the lines in mantukaw style varies from seven to nine. However, each line is clearly marked and the semantic parallelism is consistent:

Table 3: Sound parallelisms in an excerpt from uwaging in mantukaw style

In Pulangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon	In Visayan-Cebuano
Iyan pomag payagon	Mao pa may tugutan
Sa liwalos egpanggonggab	Ang hangin nga ipangpildi
Na iyan pomag bayabayon	Nga mao pa may baybayan
Sa liyo egpanlikamwa	Ang hangin nga motumpag
Panlikamwa ko pangpang	Pangtumpag ug pangpang
Na panggonggab ko linasong	Nga pangtumpag gyud ug pangpang

V. Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that the ability to sing uwaging entails a skill that is learned through years of listening to the MATERIALITY of the singing voice. The poetics of uwaging revolves around the concept of sampah. This prescribes the fundamental quality of balance and symmetry that shape the beauty of sound and meaning that Pulangihon-Umayamnon attribute to the voice in epic song. Two related materials—tune formulas and poems of long names—were examined in details and analyzed how their features adjust to the poetic demands in actual performance of epic song. This study showed that the tune-formulae (1) facilitate the regulation of lines consisting of eight syllable-pulses, (2) move the narrative into various moods, and (3) maintain the primary ludic quality of echoing vocal sonorities that result from the repetitions and variations of words as they flow.

In conclusion, a singer of the uwaging tale does not make poetic lines with elaborate architectonic design that the technology of writing affords. Rather, he weaves the long poem locally step by step, line by line, as in walking, spontaneously stringing words, which sonorities resemble each other, block by block. It is this cohesion of the sound of the voice that, I argue, engages the listener, perhaps more than the content of the narrative that such hero and heroine have been so and so. Everyone knows the story of Agyu and his clan, their war, their heroism, their compassion, bravery and so on. But there are also aspects in the performance of uwaging that compels the audience to enjoy it as a sheer hedonistic sonic enterprise. This paper has pointed out that this comes out of the materiality of the embodied voice as the rhythms of words flow into balanced and symmetrical structures of lines.

Appendix A:
The Twelve Tune-Formulae of Datu Sinuhoy, Recorded in May 2005

.

Key:
M = motto
E = echo
LP = linking particle/s
CP = closing particle/s

1. Dondon



2. Dingko



3. Hondaw



4. Onin



5. Aninaw-aw



6. Eh nin (Voice of the Spirit of Uwaging)



7. Liliwanon



8. Tagolowanon



9. Voice of the spirit from Mambalakan Mountain



10. Ongkakak



The metered tune-formulae

11. Manlogtanon



12. Pulangihon



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The preceding document was presented at the Tenth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics (10-ICAL). To properly reference this work, please use the following format:

<LastName>, <FirstName>. 2006. <PaperTitle>. Paper presented at Tenth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics. 17-20 January 2006. Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, Philippines. http://www.sil.org/asia/philippines/ical/papers.html

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