

***Kabiyak ng Pusong***  
**An Inculturated Approach to Genesis' Creation of the Woman**

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**Abstract**

*Kabiyak ng Pusong* is a popular Filipino term for spouse. It is literally translated as *half of the heart* with a strong reference to the *whole* or the *other half* (of the heart). Its relevance to marriage attempts a modest investigation on the creation of the woman *from the ribs of the man*.

The paper analyzes the creation of the woman from the rib of Adam and assesses the cultural and anthropological natures involved in the traditions of Genesis as described in both the Hebrew and Greek origins. After establishing contextual analysis in the biblical approaches from the Hebrew to the Septuagint translations, there is a need to utilize these seemingly effective means to deliver a valid exposition of doctrinal teachings.

The approach called *Inculturation*, however, limits the presentation from dissecting further into the anthropological nature of the human being but rather focuses on affecting the human conditions of marriage with the use of an already existing Filipino concept *Kabiyak ng Pusong*. The biblical "Rib of Adam" can be approached by deriving the *Kabiyak ng Pusong* as a literary substitute to the biblical text in the pastoral ministries and catechesis towards a more meaningful and culturally appropriate understanding of marriage.

**Keywords:** creation, rib, Inculturation, marriage, man, woman, heart, love

## Introduction

The Philippines was under the Spanish regime for almost four centuries. Its Catholic identity can be traced back in 1521, the earliest recorded colonization of the country led by Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese, serving for the king of Spain coming off the island through the galleons in search for spices. The Philippines is in fact named after the King of Spain, King Philip II. Its inhabitants are called Filipinos.

With the Catholic traditions brought primarily by the cross imbibed among the natives, indoctrinations through biblical narratives have greatly influenced them, paving way towards catechism, conversion and eventual baptism to those who embraced the newly introduced Christian faith. Undeniably, prior to the arrival of the colonizers, there were already folk traditions on creation myths among the natives. These myths that shaped their faith and beliefs come in several forms, either told orally, some written, some in form of songs, rituals and dances. These traditions which were preserved over the years were transmitted orally and handed to the next generations, until modifications and adaptations transpired according to the signs of the times and cultures of the inhabitants. Some of these known traditions are kept today in the archives, while some are still being fashioned to be told, revised or rewritten, and translated to different dialects and languages.

More common folktales among the natives are centered on the story of Creation. The common interest on creation reveals further among the tribes the need to satisfy their search for meaning and of their origin as human beings. This same notion holds true in the writing of the scriptures particularly in the same subject of Creation. The Vatican II document, *Dei Verbum*, aptly describes, to have “come through the contemplation and study of their beliefs who ponder these things in their hearts.” (DV 8; cf. Luke 2:19, 51). With pondering hearts, the natives were driven to reflect deeper into their own experiences and come up with their stories according to their traditions and beliefs.

A major characteristic of the common folklores is their similarity to the scriptures in terms of recognizing the power of the supernatural. Both the Scriptures and folktales adhere to the supernatural and parade a story of power, of interdependence and of redemption. Ancient Filipino myths on gods like *Laon*, *Makaobus*, *Bathala*, *Maykapal*, *Gurgurang*, *Eugpamulak Manobo* and many others are just proofs of regional adulations confirming the natives’ mediation towards the supernatural.

A good example of an adaptation of the creation account is the story known as *Malakas at Maganda*. Its biblical reference is quite obvious as it followed the basic characters of the Creator who possess the power to create out of nothing, plus the male and female species. Bearing anonymous authorship, the story evolved from traditions and has been into several revisions and modifications. *Malakas at Maganda* features the origin of the human beings, individually, the man and the woman. The names are Filipino terms translated literally as “*Strong and Beautiful*”. In an online article entitled “Creation Myths Among the Early Filipinos”, the author, Francisco Demetrio, S. J. observed a development of adaptations from a single story of creation with new characters and plots being introduced according to specific themes and interpretations relevant to the context of the story. The cultural dimensions served as the focal point of tale adaptation.

Regardless of sophistication on the plot of the story where variations on adaptations may occur, it still apparently leads to the basic presumption which is the redemption of the man and the

woman. Whether the tale themes for happiness or tragedy, the issue on love and marriage always appear in the setting. At this point, the “proto-type of love and marriage taking place in the early times before the birth of mankind” (Demetrio, n.d.) has been assumed. Closer to this assumption are the implications of a unitive relationship in most aspects of ancient tales.

## Overview

What folktales and Genesis have in common is they both emerge from experiences and aspirations of the people with a strong sense of a supernatural. The presumption was to fill the gap of mystery, and extends to the unending search for meaning of their existence. There are efforts in literary interpretations to discover how ancient materials were written with the corresponding literary forms. The inculturated approach is to assume and compare the minds of the ancient Filipino raconteurs the relevance of their tale from the biblical authorship. In this sense, a bridging to the limitations of scriptural writing is enhanced by the perceived cultural practices and undertakings observed in the conditions of the community.

This paper zeroes in to the contexts and culture of the biblical authors in Genesis. The Bible, being a major source in the pastoral and catechetical ministries of teaching and preaching marriage is itself a magisterial authority. Although there is a claim of inerrancy, the process of handling down have put some questions to literary issues particularly in the translation of the scriptures. There is also a perceived limitation in the context of the writing of the scriptures. Thereby, a careful investigation of the contexts have to be considered in any form of translation or interpretation. The challenge was to determine properly the descriptions of those which may not have been perceived at the biblical setting.

Naturally, limitations can exist with the current (scientific) terrain compared to how it was perceived during the biblical writing. As an example, the Genesis’ description of a world which ancient traditions believed to have situated on a plateau has finally been proven otherwise, spherically. This spherical notion has been proven in Magellan’s quest of the new world, as he quoted, “The Church says the earth is flat, but I know that it is round, for I have seen the shadow of the moon, and I have more faith in a shadow than in the Church” (Sorensen, n.d.). The same is the anthropological perception to the human being, primarily composed of the clay from the ground (Gen. 2:7), and eventually the flesh (Gen. 2:21,23) proven otherwise by science and modern technology to be more diverse and complex, proving further that there is so much in the human nature to decipher. The myths and tales on world and humanity were embraced at that time with profoundness on the meaning more than the literal interpretations. What these stories convey strongly satisfied the desire for a Divine reality within the realms of human perception. What is indispensable is the unadulterated truth that is imbibed and transmitted in history, which is of God’s love and relationship to his creation, the human beings. Today, the apparently conflicting concepts in comprehending the religious value of Creation is being complemented by science as prescribed in the Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC, 323–325; 356).<sup>1</sup> The accounts of myths contained in the scriptures remain salvific truths, inspiring further the succeeding generations to create a story of their own, steadfastly searching for meaning of their existence.

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<sup>1</sup> The Catechism for Filipino Catholics teaches that Science explains *how*, and religion tells the *why* of Creation. The two rather complement in explaining the doctrine.

The use of parallel myths as a proposed approach in relating the creation story particularly that of human beings is not a literary innovation. Past centuries have already noted, such as in Plato's *Symposium* (189D–191D), synthesized by Schelkle:

Aristophanes recounts a myth with comparable motifs. Since the round sphere is the perfect shape, human beings originally existed as spheres. They were male-female beings with four feet, four hands, and two faces. They also possessed great strength and power, and sought to climb up to the heavens of the gods. In order to weaken them, Zeus determined to divide each human being into halves. With Apollo's help, he formed human beings into the two sexes that they now are. The two halves, however, strive to return to unity again. "It is from this distant epoch, then, that we may date the innate love which human beings feel for one another, the love which restores us to our ancient state by attempting to weld two beings into one and heal the wounds which humanity suffered." (Schelkle, 1979).

The comparison with that of Plato is glaring. It was a story with the concept of "cleaving"<sup>2</sup> with oddly ambiguous meanings, one connoting separation, and the other as a description to stick two separate objects. This proposed inculturated approach offers a theological discourse with the use of a popular folk culture parallel to that of Plato's philosophical discourse.

The key to this study goes by demonstrating a popular folktale. Sans biblical concepts, folktales provide the needed material in understanding the *beginnings* in the form of legends which were extensive as a literary form of appreciation and reflection to the origins. Extracting how these tales were promoted and exposed develop an understanding of its cultural background.

For catechetical basis and parallelism, Genesis 2 has to be understood with its literary genre, with a given socio-cultural and anthropological view. The mythical aspect of Genesis that holds adequate relevance to the folktales will be adapted in the study and eventually inculturate the creation of the woman for the enhancement of proper understanding and catechesis for marriage. Plato's *Symposium* (as cited above) captured the essence of this Biblical saga. While Plato's audience involves a highly engaged discourse, this modest paper parallels Plato to present an inculturated approach on the Creation of the woman, with the use of a Philippine folk culture for the married, known as the *better halves* or *Kabiyak ng Puso*.

### **Filipino Legends and the Story of Creation**

Two legends complement the study, a Filipino folktale, *Malakas at Maganda* and an adaptation of Genesis' *Adam and Eve*. It is essential to recall that in the attempt to expound the evolution of the stories, understanding the context of the authors is important in the literary interpretation. A pattern of acknowledging the supernatural in the beginnings of human nature, with its moral order for unification is a common proto-type and ingredient in narrating stories. Whether the ancient folktales are coincidental with the Creation stories, the human drama of searching for their origin is a moral norm in the early literary writing genre.

The following tales illustrate how the first human beings, man and woman were perceived, and how stories were told.

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<sup>2</sup> See *Genesis* 2:23–24.

### ***Malakas at Maganda***

The legend of *Malakas at Maganda* is one of the most popular ancient Filipino story depicting the origin of the first human beings. The legend has no recorded detail of authorship. The title was not considered original as the story evolved from different traditions deriving from the lowland tribes (Demetrio, n.d.). As a tale earlier described, the power and providence of the Creator was intrinsic and the preeminence of the human beings was less striking, yet prominent. To illustrate an example, Kevin Kalyra has the following summary of the legend:

The world had only the sea and the sky, and between the sea and the sky, flew a beautiful *kite*. Unfortunately, this lovely bird had no home, and in frustration, began to stir up the sea. The sea angrily crashed against the sky, and the sky threw pieces of land to quell the sea's anger. Then, the sky ordered the kite to live on an island.

During this exact time, the sea breeze and land breeze were married. Together they had a child, named bamboo. One day, **Bamboo** was gently floating against the sea, and accidentally struck the feet of the kite. The bird, furious at the Bamboo, pecked the innocent stick into two pieces: **one piece became a man, the other piece, a woman...**(Kalyra, n.d.)

As a common recipe in ancient folktales, the story above proceeded with a delineation of a family, though, the evolution of their descendants is not anymore told to continue bearing no significance to the study. Without discrediting the relevance, it is shortened to emphasize the origin of how the man and the woman came into being from the lateral and equal breaking of the bamboo. The names *Malakas at Maganda* were assigned to denote a deeper meaning and truth about Filipino culture: Men as strong and sturdy (Malakas) where the family depends on them, while women as beautiful, sweet, and soft (Maganda). The lateral breaking of the bamboo exemplifies equality. Its equitable entity is natural as the break lines follow the natural bamboo fibers, creating an equal split from the base to the end of the pile. With this equal breaking, the parity of the man and the woman are naturally unquestionable, a structure and belief already realized and assured at that ancient time. Note that this Filipino tale gave an almost exact description parallel to Plato's symposium as cited earlier (189D–191D).

*Malakas at Maganda* typifies a Filipino love story and recognition of the Divine power. The tale is evident of a Creation narrative exemplified with the divine power to create and with the doctrinal implications that also elevates the dignity of the human beings as the apex of creation. The theme of Love is a primary recipe in this tale which directs towards the couple's unity. Marriage may not always be explicit in every story for it requires and occupies a particular tradition that necessitates further elaboration for the readers or listeners. As a legend, *Malakas at Maganda* is sufficient to satisfy the Filipino belief and imagination that God is the Creator and Love is the uniting aspect to flourish creation. There is nothing however in *Malakas at Maganda* that directly correlates the religious and biblical contexts as the focal sources of the story. The Christian impressions in this tale are not fully established, what was rather apparent was the religious value which may have been detached from any biblical authority.

### ***Adam and Eve***

The other story, *Adam and Eve*, is not directly but inspired from the scriptures on the creation of the man and the woman. It's an ancient Filipino folktale. Although no direct correlation is established as regards its origin, the story of *Adam and Eve* displays parallelism to that of *Malakas at Maganda*, where two individuals, with two sexes, male and female were created,

not by themselves but by another being. This particular story with exactly the same plot to the biblical *Adam and Eve* is spotted from a remarkable collection of a tale late in the second quarter of this century by an anonymous worker in Balingasag, Mindanao, for the Bureau of Public Schools (Demetrio, n.d.). The story introduced a new kind of a Judaeo-Christian identity similar to Genesis. The following is a summary of the report on *Balingasag* tale and a quote: Adam was the first man to whom some of the wisdom of God was given. He could talk, think, and reason. A companion too was given him so that he might not be lonely. While Adam was asleep, God extracted Eve from the left rib of Adam just underneath the heart.

With a significant meaning, God did not extract her from the feet of man so that she might be stepped upon; nor was she taken from the head so that she will be under the will and control of man's power; but she was taken from the rib, near the heart, to be loved, adored, and protected by man. This woman was Eve, the first woman. (Manuel Gapuz Collection, n.d.)

The Christian trademark was evident in the *Adam and Eve* tale, adapting the scriptural narrative on the making of the woman, alluding to Genesis with special references to Adam and his “ribs” as the origin of creating the companion. The story summarized the biblical creation of the woman and inferred a “significant meaning” to the rib and its position in the human body. A very significant inclusion to the biblical narrative was the tale's mention of the “heart” underneath the rib. While the heart has been over-rated in biblical essays as the “the seat of psychic life, of emotions, of intellect, of volition and moral life, the point of contact with God, equivalence of personality,” (Buttrick, et al., 1962) it was rather not too explicit in the (Biblical) Creation narrative.

The comparative layout of the “feet and the head” together with the “heart” spelled a moral call and commitment for both the man and the woman in the story. The *Adam and Eve* tale captures the moral demands with the inclusion of the heart to signify the natural ordering towards relationship founded in the human beings.

In anthropological sense, the *Adam and Eve* tale's distinguishing of the first two human body parts which are the feet and the head away from the heart spells much about moral and natural functions. As the tale described, the woman taken NOT from the feet and the head (which symbolized control over her) – alienates or “separates”, while deriving from the “heart” seeks to “unite” with its call to love, adore and protect. To be more concise, creating the woman from the feet or the head imply alienation and indignance; while creating the woman from the heart, underneath the ribs implies unity. This is indeed a call relevant and natural to the husband and wife, towards a better relationship. In addition, Genesis is reflected on how the man and woman should proceed in creation, stressing love and equality.

### **Pastoral Implications of the Rib to Marriage**

The book of Genesis' reference to the heart as to the ancient Filipino folktale grounding was not so evident. What scriptures can provide are allusions that pertain the heart to the human psychology and emotions (Buttrick et al., 1962). While the “rib” story was explicit in the Creation narrative, its impact was enshrining and apparently authoritative, which nonetheless needs further clarification and contextual consideration.

In the Philippines, the *Adam and Eve* tale was undoubtedly popular. Most Filipino wedding homilies explicated this concept to which it highlights the source of woman's creation, the

“rib”. The tale signified that the rib of Adam, “which is from his side, not from any part of the man’s body, so as the woman walks besides the man, not at his back, not in front, not on top and not below him” was suggestive of aspirations to equality with the man. The tale reflects a traditional and cultural setup of a man-woman relationship in that period where male dominance was highly projected. The woman’s aspiration with the man to work on and “walk with,” remained inherent and the clingy attitude of the woman towards her partner to maintain the social status persists with dependency. Such deportments if they are to be assessed are something digressive from the context of harmony and matrimony.

The role of current pastoral ministry in this context is so essential. Reviewing significant biblical terms related to current issues are important especially those that are consistently integrated in the liturgy and practical applications of Theology. Its significance is relative to achieve the authentic meaning and intention of the celebrations, with references to its original intention as reflected from the scriptures. If the discussion on Marriage needs to be grounded, it requires a great deal of reference to the scriptures, particularly in the context of Creation. It is in the context of Creation that the purposes of marriage are realized. Over the generations, the ends of marriage emerge and develop into new concepts as these unfold with the articulations in theology.

The adaptation of the Rib of Adam from the above stated Filipino folklore, the *Adam and Eve* tale, is usually referred to in most pastoral ministries and homilies in the Philippines particularly in the Sacrament of Matrimony. Sensing the crucial role in catechesis and Catholic teachings, there needs a proper understanding of these narratives by their use and adaptation for a deeper grasp and application with reference to the scripture. This is to avoid the risk of deviating the catechism from the biblical message by emphasizing the folktales.

The term “rib”, in particular is intensely mentioned in many homilies and practical discussions pertaining to marriage. The foretold *Adam and Eve* tale is a testimony to this claim. The rib quickly assumes the role of women in the society. The interpretation accentuating man’s pre-eminence by the order of their creation downplays deeper reflection to their natural order. Over-emphasizing the rib is placing the man in superior stance over the woman with a reference to the more dominant skeletal structure sourced from him. With its inferred “significant meaning”, *Adam and Eve* envisions equality among couples. The discourses on the “rib” play a very crucial role especially its theological impact. Several reflections and concepts have been presented as regards the meaning of the rib. The critical issue on these discourses is when improper comprehensions are elevated to the liturgy and made worse if deepened into the experiences of the husband and wife. Stalling to the “rib” context defies a more meaningful and purposeful end of the marital union, denounces equality and promotes discrimination among couples in adherence to obsolete traditions as forewarned in the tale.

The moral allusion of the *Adam and Eve* tale is the position of the rib with reference to the “heart.” In most folklores, the heart symbolizes love. Although the heart has already been acknowledged in the tale, there was no emphasis as to its functions. The heart’s centrality is prefigured with emotions, in the context of salvation, it is where love manifests. In the context of marriage, it is the demanded act from the couples, obliging them with their use of will and instinct. It is a human act, commanding them to love one another.

Rather than stressing the rib of Adam, which subconsciously elevates the male specie a notch higher than the female by positioning her on the side, an appropriate tale has to be told in

today's culture reflective of equality to both the man and the woman, highlighting same origin, same nature, one. Significantly, without alterations to the biblical authority.

### Understanding the Rib from Ancient Authors

The challenge posed is the relevance of the rib as perceived by the ancient authors. Just as creation was narrated by the sacred authors, where the balance between science and religion has to be established, their context has to be uncovered for the sake of understanding their perceptions. The following positions the emerging descriptions of the creation of the woman from the Hebrew traditions and how it was handed down in translation by the Greeks.

The Septuagint which is the Greek translation of the bible from Hebrew has no reference to the “rib”. The Hebrew texts contain the word *tsela* (צֶלַע), which means “side.” The Greek literature scribed *pleura* (πλευρά) which means from the “side of the body.” Contrasting the Greek and the Hebrew translation has to be seriously dealt with. The *side of the body* is different from the *side*. Following a chronology of translations, the former establishes a development from the latter with considerations to social and cultural developments.

With *tsela* as the major term for the *side* according to the Hebrew translation, understanding then the rib alludes to a historical cultural approach as regards its main usage in context. Several usage of the side were found but the scarcity of the side's application to the human body was neither explicit. For some instances however, the Ark of the Covenant (*Ex. 25:12*); the altar (*Ex. 27:7*); the tabernacle (*Ex. 26:20*); the outer skin of the tabernacle (*Ex. 35*) referred to the side. In another instance, Solomon's temple also alluded to “another associated component”, like those on the sides or adjoining to the temple (*1 Kings 6:5–6,34*), which pertains not to a main part but its adjacent object or adjoining structure. It was in the book of Daniel where the rib suggested a flesh, though dealt not exactly of a human being but of a beast: “And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth..” (*Dan. 7:5*).

Regardless of its distinction, the anthropological aspect of the “side” reveals more of the woman from the main part of the man, not adjacent nor adjoining. To consider the woman from the “side” (*tsela*) of the man is rather convincing. To think that the woman was created from the “side of the body” (*pleura*), analogous to the side of the altar, or the temple of Solomon as earlier narrated in Exodus and the book of Kings, would render her not part of the man but someone adjacent to him. This seemingly anthropological view sees the woman alienated from the man in creation, nullifying equality. But amidst ambiguity for the “side,” the “rib” is consistently viewed as the significant visible link uniting the man and the woman.

Admittedly, the “side” (*tsela*) against the “side of the body” (*pleura*) perception remains an opinion as this paper seeks to argue to support the former as the relative reference for the rib. Both Hebrew and Greek culture acknowledges the rib as a human body part. The bones function to hold the structure of the body. It is a major composition of the male and female anthropology. Considering the woman from the rib is more logical and legitimate than anything else like skin, hair, or any other parts of the human body. Internal organs as a major human body parts were inconceivable with due consideration to technology at that period.

In this age of civilization, a concept to the internal body parts is a high sophistication. But in the ancient tradition, the rib is otherwise proven physically in several contexts and traditions. A bare manifestation of the rib could be touch therapies where the body structure is determined.



While a more concrete exposition of ribs is observed in burial sites or exposures to human bones elsewhere along the Jews' nomadic journeys. To subscribe to the rib than any other human body parts like blood, or internal organs which could be beyond frontiers in their perception is a more realistic and acceptable interpretation. Thinking of skin or flesh as the source in creating the woman does not reflect more of a solid foundation and interpretation for firmness and stability, much more, it does not contemplate for a "completing" of the man, but more of ripping a part from him. This concept was neither explicitly supported by other biblical texts.

### **Inculturating the "Rib"**

The Hebrew and Greek comparison can become complex when contrasted to modern histories. The distinctions will be clearly established by the gaps in generation as well as social and cultural developments. The historical perception also varies depending on the time. In order to bridge the gap, a literary approach needs to analyze the context of the contents for interpretation. An analysis called "*genre of fiction*" (Carr, 1996) distinguished ancient from modern historians of Genesis:

The modern fictional texts on which our literary methods were developed make no claims to exactly report past events, and they are usually the complete creation of their authors. In contrast, ancient historylike texts like Genesis were written to make certain true claims about the past. This means that their authors often did not work at the same level of freedom with their material as a modern writer of fiction does. Indeed, ancient authors did not even have the freedom of modern historians. Whereas a modern historian builds a brand new narrative after having critically evaluated her/his resource. As a result, modern historians would not just use traditions, but would reproduce them even as they modified them and/or completely re-contextualized them. (Carr, 1996)

The rib narrative is the center of the ancient authors' interest in transmitting the tradition on the creation of the woman. In the minds of ancient readers, understanding the rib however, as the "side of the man" (*pleura*), or the "side" (*tsela*), bears no significance since it already affirms a social behavior, reminding the woman's role and place with the man or her husband in the society. While no proofs of research and fact finding was conducted (it was not the order of writing at that time anyway), the rib of Adam was apparently the more prominent and accentuated sturdy body part which makes it more suitable source for making the woman. Whether an actual vision of the rib was substantiated, it was proven real needless of technological aid during that generation. Burial sites and rites attest to the ribs. The Israelites were exposed to burial sites which provided testimonies to ribs. Jewish traditions concur with a majority of burial practices by different non-Jewish tribes, that they too bury their dead. Abraham himself purchased a burial place (*Gen. 23*). The Israelites' nomadic culture may also have factored in their burial ceremonies, as they bury their dead on caves during their journey to the promised land. Although no explicit citation relating burial to bones, Baruch described, "to have the bones of our kings and the bones of our fathers brought out from their burial places" (*Bar. 2:24*). In all of these burial testimonies, the only proof for the rib is the dead and decayed. The descriptions are compelling evidences that bones are major and dominant part of the human body. In adherence to Carr's *genre of fiction*, the bones or the ribs as dominant body parts were built into a narrative of human creation and composition. Thus, in the biblical tradition's reflection, wrote: "So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was

asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man...” (*Gen. 2:21–22*).

The Septuagint grounding of the rib is legitimate as it never contradicted with the Hebrew *tsela*. The process of translating rather opened an opportunity. Acknowledging biblical authority and considering a *genre of fiction*, the ancient portrait of *side* and the *rib* reveals truth about human nature, origin and culture. Therefore, a modern historian’s view with his present condition can sufficiently integrate his genre of fiction towards a better understanding of an authentic teaching appropriate to his generation. It is in this assumption that Wayne Simpson affirms, accordingly:

Since the concept of a rib was not so evident in the Old Testament Hebrew translation, what is rather striking is the literal translation of *tsela* which is the side of the man, then the justification for the rib could be that the woman is the side of the man, which can be interpreted as **half of the man**. Such theological reflection is however maintained by scriptural support such as “one flesh”. That the man and the woman, coming from the same flesh, are actually one. (Simpson, 1996)

As a quick overview, the cultural understanding can be laid with the following development, that the woman is created from the “side” according to the Hebrew tradition, which was translated by the Greek with their context to the human side as the “rib”, which is actually the “half of the man” by virtue of the hearts calling them out to love, making the woman, the other half of the one flesh. Thus in the next section, an attempt to see beyond the heart reveals further an inculturated approach to the creation of the woman with reference to Genesis.

### ***Kabiyak ng Puso: Inculturated Theology of the Rib***

The book of Genesis strikingly described the main composition of the man with his bone, particularly the rib, and the flesh. The “side”, as pointed by the scriptures is analogous to *tsela* which referred to that of Adam’s part, not adjacent. The interpretation favored Genesis’ implication making the “side” as the part of the Man, not adjacent to him. The man soon acclaimed, “*bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh*” (*Gen. 2:23*).

In Pope John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*, he developed “*Original Solitude*” as one of the three experiences that are common and fundamental to the human heart. The others are Original Unity and Original Nakedness (PJP II, 2006). While others see imperfection in this solitude, demonstrated by God’s realization – “NOT GOOD for the man to be alone”, John Paul II sees “*Original Unity*”, where the man longs for a companion, fit for him, where he (the man) realizes incompleteness, no one then was suitable for him (*Gen. 2:20*). The transition from solitude to unity is eventually expounded by the Pope in the same book (PJP II, 2006). In his exposition, later identified the rifts borne out of man’s concupiscence. The rift is signified by its character of severing from the original design.

According to the book *Called to Love* (Anderson and Granados, 2009), the “rifts” between man and God; within man; man and woman; parents and children are brought about by the wounds of sin due to the fragility of the heart or concupiscence. Literally, a rift separates what was united, or breaches a relationship. This separation however, is not an indication that the woman “rifted” from the man through the context of the breaking from the side. The scripture was very clear, it was all by God’s hands that took the woman from the man, totally distinct from the rift

caused by humanity's disobedience. The rift which separated the man and the woman was a free act from the Creator, who eventually called them in unity. Note that same concept was explicit in Plato's *Symposium*, that the "sliced" human beings, in order to be made orderly, was to be healed by the god (190D–190E).

At the Sacrament of Matrimony, the man and woman are called to love one another. In the Theology of the Body, what weakens the relationship was the "fragility of the heart", not the less "density of the bones". The needed strength for the unity of the man and the woman is not spelled by an intense or massive rib or flesh but by the loving nature from the single heart. The call to love is defined by the human heart, to unite the rift originally bonded by Christ, so that they may be one.

The *Adam and Eve* tale which issued a profound inculturation by its relevance to the rib will be paralleled towards a new approach. Playing a major role in the inculturation is the "heart" or "*puso*" (in Filipino). The "heart" has been given a significant meaning from the tale, and in a separate document, utterly expounded by John Paul II.

For an inculturated approach, the two Philippine legends described in this paper, *Malakas at Maganda* with the *Adam and Eve* tale (Adam and Eve) will be combined, paralleled to that of Plato's cited sections from *Symposium*. Man's original solitude, destroyed by sin is looked upon with original unity. Rift is acknowledged and unity is desired.

In the Philippine context, a spouse, either the husband or the wife is called *Kabiyak ng Puso* a Filipino term (Tagalog) literally translated as the other "*Kabiyak*" (half) and "*puso*" (heart) or "*half of the heart.*" From the *Malakas at Maganda* folktale, the image of a bamboo, split equally crosswise best describes *Kabiyak ng Puso*. The image of two beings, perceived originally as one, portrays a longing for unity. From the same image, John Paul II's *original solitude* as originally one piece of bamboo cane was cut to half crosswise, retains its *original unity* when put together, and only the creator's hand can put them together, signifying marriage in this aspect.

*Kabiyak ng Puso* becomes more appropriate for both the husband and the wife because of the moral order of their union, "to love one another". Loving one another is a command, not accidental, not an inherent duty being given during the Sacrament of Matrimony. To be equally divided between the man and the woman, directly implies equality as narrated in Genesis. Although not explicit in the Creation account, perhaps due to social conditions at that time, there remains an inherent equality among all men and women, and there is the natural duty for both the spouses in Creation. The assumption of their equality was affirmed by *Malakas at Maganda*, situating the man and woman's purpose in marriage. *Kabiyak ng Puso* denotes equality in all aspects of their married union. In the Eucharistic Prayer, the union of Mary and Joseph is acknowledged as spouses as it proclaims:

That with the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,  
with the Blessed Joseph, her Most Chaste **Spouse**...

Following that acknowledgment of the Virgin Mother and Joseph as spouses, the Filipino version of the Eucharistic Prayer clearly translates the word spouse as *Kabiyak ng Puso* with the following proclamation:

“Kaisa ng Mahal na Birheng Maria na Ina ng Diyos,  
Kaisa ni San Jose na kanyang *kabiyak ng puso*...”

In the Scriptures, Christ’ command was echoing, “You shall love the Lord your God, with all your “HEART”, with all your soul and with all your strength...” (Mt. 22:37), the same command expressed from Deuteronomy 6:5. In these declarations, the heart overshadows the rib.

In the Sacrament of Matrimony, which also literally attempts to explain the creation of the woman from the rib of the man, the following can be expounded during wedding rites, with emphasis on the union of the one flesh, coming from one part, essential in the loving relationships of the man and the woman. To wit, the following can be shared to highlight the matrimonial character and biblical origin of marriage. The following is directly lifted from the creation of the woman in Genesis 2. The modification of the story is the suggested discourse to intensify the explanation and theology of marriage, thus, another tale:

God said it was not good for the man to be alone, and so he will be created a helpmeet. And so God put the man to sleep and while asleep, God opened his chest and divided his heart. Man was given a big heart in order to fulfill much his loving capacity. Yet with a big heart, man was still lonely.

From the half of the heart of the man, God created the woman. That is why, the man is destined to look for the woman, who is half of his heart, (*kabiyak ng kaniyang puso*).

(Not *Katadyang!* Other part of the rib!)

The above holds a great deal of legitimacy as John Paul II himself states in his catechism that the rib seems to indicate the heart (PJP II, 2006; West, 2007). Without directly deviating from the previously renowned tales, such as *Malakas at Maganda*, *Kabiyak ng Puso* embodies equality necessary between the couple. Instead of a sturdy rib depicting strength which is a common male characteristic, a huge heart, soft and tender, embodies his will and loving capacity to be more than appropriate. Longing for a companion is inherent with someone of the same nature, thus, what satisfies the man must be the one whom his heart belongs. The woman, as the husband’s *Kabiyak ng Puso*, is the only helpmeet destined for him. *Malakas at Maganda* were equally divided when broken, the woman, created from the heart, from the side of the man, gets equal dignity with the man. In this manner, nothing between the two is superior. *Kabiyak ng Puso* is more appropriate to theologize the creation of the woman. More appropriate than *Katadyang* (*part or half of the ribside*).

## Conclusion

The past and present interplays elaborated by the paper bring an essential dimension in the deepening of the Christian faith, most specially in marriage. The radical use of a myth as a substitute to an authentic Church teaching may possibly open an interpretation contrary to an established thought which may also compromise a cultural underpinning. On the other hand, proper understanding of a literary work soundly based on the political, religious and cultural scenario which serves as a mirror to the present setting provides a more appreciation of the past, which may not have been generously gifted with the appropriate comprehension due to

invincible ignorance, now looks forward to inculturate by adapting the signs of the times, invoking the authority of the past.

The above approach simply determines the necessity of inculturation. The Genesis narrative has not been totally altered, but with the inculturated “rib”, a new dimension in the pastoral ministry and catechetical instruction has been made adaptable. Liturgical celebrations and catechetical instructions need to be deeply inculturated in order to understand further the real meaning of these celebrations. An inculturated approach, which is grounded on the original sources and translations gives unique and authentic interpretation and meaning to the celebration.

Relative to the topic, an inculturation applying the creation of the woman according to Genesis approaches *Kabiyak ng Puso* as an appropriate tale in Pastoral ministry to re-enact the biblical rib. *Kabiyak ng Puso* calls and reminds the man and the woman their original unity, the original design of God in creation.

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