

DISPOSABLE

LABAYUNON

TAPON

By Amanda L. Andrei

with Cebuano and Tagalog translations by Ara Chawdhury

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CHILD (TATA)

ARTHOPOD-CHILD (BATA NGA UMANG, BATANG UMANG)

CHILD #2 (TATA #2)

Place

A river in the Philippines - maybe the Tullahan in Caloocan, or
Subangdaku in Mandaue City / Cebu City

Time

Today

Written for American Blues Theater's 2023 *Ripped* Festival,
featuring short plays or monologues "ripped" from today's
headlines.

The inspiration for this play came from the following articles:

- "Surprising Creatures Lurk in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch" by Meghan Bartels on April 17, 2023 for Scientific American
- "In the Philippines, a nation swallowed by plastic waste" by Jintak Han on April 22, 2023 for The Washington Post

Day 1

A river in the Philippines - let's say it's the Tullahan River in Caloocan, or the Subangdaku in Mandaue City / Cebu City.

It's filled with brightly colored plastic bottles, candy wrappers, Styrofoam containers, and all manner of polymer rubbish.

The faint sound of traffic, birds chirping.

Something underneath the rubbish moves ever so slightly, rippling the water.

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A ball bounces onto the banks of the river, then lands in the trash/water.

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Child (Tata) appears.

Child tries to get the ball. Grabs a stick, tries to bring the ball closer. Trash gets stuck on the stick. The ball floats in and out of reach.

Child is finally able to get the ball close enough to reach it. Debates grabbing it with their hands (it's so dirty), then sighs. Reaches for the ball.

But it won't come out.

Child tries to grab it with both hands - almost falls in - then tugs - tugs - TUGS -

The ball comes out, grasped by Arthropod-Child (Bata nga Umang, Batang Umang).

ARTHOPOD-CHILD ŌŌōō°òŌŌó°øôōŌø°ōŌ!		BATA NGA UMANG ŌŌōō°òŌŌó°øôōŌø°ōŌ!		BATANG UMANG ŌŌōō°òŌŌó°øôōŌø°ōŌ!
CHILD AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA		TATA AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA		TATA AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

Child runs away screaming.

Arthropod-Child dives into the river.

The ball teeters, then falls into the river.

Day 2

Under the river and trash, Arthropod-Child plays with the ball.

Arthropod-child has become quite fond of this toy!

And something about this ball is... different.

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Child appears. Child holds an electric flyswatter. Child swats at the mosquitos around. Bzzt. Bzzt.

Arthropod-Child hears the noise and pokes its head out.

They see each other and freeze.

CHILD	TATA	TATA
Please give me my ball.	Palihug kos akong bola.	Ibalik mo bola ko.

ARTHOPOD-CHILD	BATA NGA UMANG	BATANG UMANG
?	?	?

CHILD	TATA	TATA
My ball. Please give it to me	Kanang bola, ambi na palihog.	Yang bola. Pakibalik po please.

ARTHOPOD-CHILD	BATA NGA UMANG	BATANG UMANG
Ööø.	Ööø.	Ööø.

Child holds up the flyswatter.

CHILD
(re: flyswatter)
I will give you this instead.

CHILD	TATA	TATA
I will give you this instead.	Imo nalang ni o.	Eto nalang sayo o.

ARTHOPOD-CHILD	BATA NGA UMANG	BATANG UMANG
Ööø.	Ööø.	Ööø.

CHILD	TATA	TATA
It's the only ball I have.	Mao ra nay duwaan nako.	Yan lang kasi bola ko e.

Arthropod-Child starts backing away.

CHILD

I need my ball!

*Arthropod-Child starts to go under trash/water,
but Child hits it with the flyswatter,
electrifying it.*

ARTHOPOD-CHILD	BATA NGA UMANG	BATANG UMANG
ÖÖÖÖÖ°°°ÖÖ°øøøÖÖöø°ö	ÖÖÖÖÖ°°°ÖÖ°øøøÖÖöø°ö	ÖÖÖÖÖ°°°ÖÖ°øøøÖÖöø°ö
Ö!!!!	Ö!!!!	Ö!!!!

*Arthropod-Child drops the ball. Child rushes to
pick it up. But then -*

A massive dumping sound.

A tidal wave of plastic trash sweeps through.

They are swept away, buried.

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Faint traffic and bird sounds.

Day 3

Another ball bounces into the plastic-filled river.

Child #2 searches for their ball. Gets a stick, tries to retrieve it.

Something bubbles.

Child, now Mutant-Child, emerges from the bubbling.

CHILD #2		TATA #2		TATA #2
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA		AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA		AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

Child #2 runs away.

Mutant-Child grabs the ball, tosses it in the air.

Arthropod-Child emerges with the first ball, which has now grown limbs, fins, and/or eyes. Mutant-ball.

They toss the second ball back and forth, swatting at it with the electric flyswatter. The mutant-ball runs back and forth between them.

They giggle.

Fade to black, as the sound of another wave of trash sweeps through.

END OF PLAY

Notes on Languages and Translation

Amanda

Arthropod-Child's language is open to interpretation; I imagine something with a lot of guttural noises and bubbles.

I asked Ara about translating this play to highlight the Philippines' linguistic diversity, especially for those of us in the diaspora.

Ara

I always write stage directions in English, even for the screen. As a minority, we're always submitting our work to bodies/companies that don't use the language or view the language only for its exotic merits.