

THE PREVAILING BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE IBANAGS AS REVEALED IN THEIR FOLK LITERATURE

Ma. Leonora Cagurangan

Instructor, School of Education, Arts and Sciences
University of Saint Louis
Tuguegarao City, Philippines

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Abstract— This study aimed to collect, classify, document and interpret five Ibanag literary types namely poem, proverbs, riddles and songs. Ibanag folk literature is didactic, moralistic, predominantly sentimental, romantic, socialistic, comic and spiritual as revealed in the themes of the literary pieces which are: Faith in God, Family solidarity, humility and simplicity, industry, love of knowledge and wisdom, patience and perseverance, reciprocity and justice, unity and cooperation, and love, courtship and marriage.

Keywords— *Ibanag literary pieces, Ibanag poems, Ibanag proverbs, Ibanag songs, Ibanag riddles*

INTRODUCTION

We live in a very dynamic and competitive world. Globalization takes its positive effects to men of all nations and races. As science and technology continuously bring innovations – these become very evident in the lifestyles of men as manifested through their perceptions and actions. These changes that are brought about by science and technology, greatly influence all men. In spite of these reasons why change happen, men have to remember too, the role of literature as a living art which progressively moves with a living and active world of people and events. It embraces the dreams of people of the past and the present and gives direction to life as it is lived.

Medina and del Castillo (1984), speak of literature as a force. As such, there is perhaps no cultural force as potent and pervasive as literature. Material progress and political power may vanish; the spirit of nationalism may wane; but the true glories of literature withstand the forces of decay and decline.

Moreover, literature as a vital and dynamic force has played an important part in the development of society and civilization. If we scan the pages of history, we shall be amazed at the role it has played at different times in various countries, in shaping and influencing cultural development. This statement can be supported by a line delivered by Dr. Florentino Hornedo in an Academic Seminar when he said, “Culture makes man different from the natural world.”

Likewise, in literature, there is a conserved heritage, which gives meaning to a people’s ideals. It molds the minds of

people by preserving the experience of the past in a cohesive and beautiful manner.

Literature, though seeming to hide timidly between the covers of a book, has frequently generated ideas that have had tremendous effect. To turn to our own country, Rizal censored and assigned to the hangman. It was the power of his forceful pen that aroused fear and hatred among the Spaniards in the Philippines, and finally, led to his execution. But his works have lived and have continued to exert powerful influence among his people.

The true meaning of literature is to be found in the fact that it deals with the ideas, thoughts and emotions of man. Literature, too, may be written or unwritten. Unwritten literature is that the recording of which has been prevented by such circumstances as unfavorable environment on primitive culture, but which nevertheless, does truly express the varied experience and life of a particular group. “Like Philippine culture,” written by Alejandro R. Roces, “our literature is of a heterogenous nature.”

The early Filipinos wrote on clay, barks of trees, leaves and bamboo tubes, using knives and other pointed instruments for pens and the sap of certain trees for ink. Thus, when the Spaniards arrived, a substantial body of writing already existed in the archipelago. Marveling at the high level of literacy among the Tagalogs, Fr. Pedro Chirino, a Jesuit historian reported in 1904 that ... “so accustomed are all these islanders to reading and writing that there is scarcely a man, and much less a woman, who cannot read and write.”

Because of the perishable quality of the materials used, however, and because the early missionaries destroyed many manuscripts in their process of evangelization, none of these writings has survived to this day. Besides, even then, the lack of good writing materials did not encourage the development of written literature.

Much of the ancient Philippine literature was really oral consisting of folk narratives, riddles, proverbs, sayings, songs, rituals, chant and epics and was definitely community – bound. The expressions sprang from the experience of the community and served its needs, from the transmission of beliefs, values, ideals, customs and more, for entertainment. Many of these

expressions still survive in our time, having been handed down orally through generations.

Del Castillo and Medina (1964) mentioned that the written literature of the Philippines is only about four hundred years old – a short period, indeed, when compared to that of many other countries, or when compared to the length of time our ancestors have lived in these Islands as mentioned by del Castillo and Medina. Various causes are responsible for the brevity of the Philippine literary history. The primary contributing factor to this condition was the destruction of most of our written native literature in the early days of Spanish dominance: owing to neglect, war and mechanized action of time.

The Commission on Higher Education mandated all tertiary courses leading to a bachelor's degree and covered in the four-year curriculum to take regional literatures of the Philippines (CHED Memo No. 59, S.1996)

Literature I (or the first Literature subject) must cover "The Literatures of the Philippines" and should focus on the literatures of all regions of the Philippines, whether writing in native or foreign languages from the beginning of Philippine history to the present. Care should be taken to ensure adequate attention to literary texts and authors outside the National Capital Region. Such directive would help the students see human being as an integral person living in both a national and global community as literature teachers are obliged to use suitable approaches in teaching the subject.

In a Regional Seminar-workshop on "Trends and Issues in Teaching Language and Literature" held on September 11, 2002 where the researcher attended, the Resource Speaker Dr. Milagros G. Tanlayco, President of the council of Department Chairmen for English (CDCE), Mentioned that oral literature be kept by making studies and putting them in anthologies for the students to study. She further emphasized the enhancement of materials that are available by recording and studying.

In the same seminar, Dr. Rosario G. Lasam, the Department Head of Cagayan State University, Tuguegarao city, Cagayan presented a paper on the review of ethnic studies on the culture and values of indigenous communities of region 2 as depicted in the people's literature. This contained a review of existing ethnic studies and literature which are unpublished but depict the nature of indigenous culture, language and values of seven ethnic communities in Region II.

In the classroom, the researcher has been encountering difficulty in eliciting samples of folk literature from her students. The students are more familiar and appreciative of Tagalog or even foreign literature due to the numerous copies of this literature that are available.

With these experiences, the researcher realized the need to collect, classify, interpret and document the Ibanag folk literature existing in twenty-two barangays of Tuguegarao City. Doing this will help preserve the rich heritage of the people and will help the Ibanags, especially the students and teachers of literature in the province understand, appreciate and develop Cagayan Folk Literature. Furthermore, through this

study, the prevailing beliefs and practices of the Ibanags were assessed as revealed in their folk literature.

Research Questions

This study aimed to collect, classify, document and interpret folk literature of the Ibanags in order to see their prevailing beliefs and practices to easily understand and better appreciate their literature. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1.) What are the prevailing beliefs and practices of the Ibanags that are found in the 22 selected barangays of Tuguegarao City?
- 2.) What sample of literary pieces are found in each of the following with their corresponding themes?
 - a. Poem
 - b. Proverb
 - c. Riddle
 - d. Song
 - e. Tale
- 3.) What are the themes contained in the following folk literature?
 - a. Poem
 - b. Proverb
 - c. Riddle
 - d. Song
 - e. Tale
- 4.) What are the prevailing beliefs and practices of the Ibanags as revealed in their folk literature in terms of the following and occasions when these are observed?
 - a. Faith in God
 - b. Family Solidarity
 - c. Humility and Simplicity
 - d. Industry
 - e. Love of Knowledge and Wisdom
 - f. Patience and Perseverance
 - g. Reciprocity and Justice
 - h. Unity and Cooperation
 - i. Love, Courtship and Marriage
- 5.) What are the common prevailing beliefs and practices of the Ibanags in the 3 clustered barangays in terms of
 - a. Faith in God
 - b. Family Solidarity
 - c. Humility and Simplicity
 - d. Industry
 - e. Love of Knowledge and Wisdom
 - f. Patience and Perseverance
 - g. Reciprocity and Justice
 - h. Unity and Cooperation
 - i. Love, Courtship and Marriage

Significance of the Study

The result of this study hopes to benefit the following:

Ibanags. The Ibanags, through their folk literature, which the researcher collected, classified, documented and interpreted, were helped in identifying their unique beliefs and practices thus would build their own identity and have feeling of pride as a people.

Students. The students shall have additional reading references to read in their leisure of time.

Teachers. Teachers, especially in literature, would have additional reading references for a richer discussion on folk literature to take place in the classes.

Curriculum. The new General Education Curriculums thrust on Literature 1 shall include the study of Ibanag folk literature.

Law-Makers (especially of the City government). Results of this study would be a basis of allocating funds to develop the rich cultural heritage of the Ibanags aside from showcasing their literature during its yearly celebration of its feast day for better appreciation and assimilation of values.

Local and National Museum. This study would enrich their collection of folk literature particularly of the province of Cagayan.

Researcher. The researcher shall be helped in identifying the prevailing beliefs and practices of the Ibanags.

Future Researchers. Recommendation in this study shall inspire other researchers to conduct similar or parallel studies.

Literature Review

The Roles of Literature

As Baltasar, et.al. (1981) writes, Literature is one of the great creations and universal means of communicating the emotional, spiritual or intellectual concerns of mankind. Like music and art, literary forms are prose and verse, and within these basic classifications, there exists enumerable varieties with regard to style and form as well as purpose; novels, plays, short stories, essays, biographies, lyric poetry, narrative poetry and epics.

Literature and instruct and inform, entertain, express personal joy and pain, reflect religious devotion, glorify a nation or hero, or advocate a particular point of view - whether it be political, social or aesthetic.

Most literature in modern times is written and printed, but there is a long history of oral literature. Oral literature may be traced back to earliest times - - - to ancient Greece and to medieval Europe, when traveling poet's entertained audiences by reciting their works. In fact, the great literary masterpieces such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, probably were originally composed orally.

The early people in England, Scotland and Ireland sang or chanted stories to which the special terms ballad has been applied. These ballads were taught to children by grandmothers

at the fireside or repeated by merrymaking groups at the inn or at the village green. These became the origin of American ballads.

In America, the first creators of oral literature were the Indians. They possessed myths, eloquent orations and religious songs. Hiawatha, a hero-tale on the prose version was retold by Longfellow in English verse, American Indian literary pieces acquaint the world of the primitive American feeling for nature, his personification of animals, his ideals of loyalty and his love of the freedom to be found in the forest and on the plains.

During the pioneering days of America, cowboys passed time away singing songs that voiced their own experiences on chanted ballads of memorable incidents in the rough life of the west. Lumberjacks sang songs set to tunes with a strong beat that aided the men in handling logs. Sectors developed the same practice of singing at their jobs.

In China, respect for the ways and customs of the minority nationalities is provided by Chinese law. It is stipulated that all minority nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written language. In order to do so, the local governments are utilized to give minorities holidays on their respective festival days wherein they chant, sing and dance.

Long before the Spaniards set foot on our islands, our forefathers already had a culture on their own. Similar in some aspects to that of the Malays, it nevertheless develop quite distinctively, and enriched through contacts with other Asians, notably the Chinese and the Indochinese, with whom the natives regularly traded. Indian and Arabic influences also filtered in through social and economic relations with the Shri-Vijaya Empire of Sumatra and the Madjapahit Empire of Java.

A literature culture particularly developed among the coastal and lowland communities of archipelago, located along the seashores and at the mouths and headwaters of navigable rivers, were open to cultural exchange and communication. Owing to similar prehistoric influences and frequent contacts with one another, these communities shared basic beliefs, values, types of social organizations and modes of living.

It was cited by Garcia, et.al. Al (1993), That perhaps the best way to understand human nature fully and to know a nation completely, short of giving into a formal study of psychology, sociology and history, is to study literature. Through literature we learn the innermost feelings of thoughts of people, the truest and most real part of themselves. Thus, we gain understanding not only of others, but more importantly of ourselves and of life itself. The folk literature of any people then is very important themselves to know who they are and for other people to understand them.

Folk literature is a form of folklore. Folklore is the traditional learning of the group. It denotes the traditions, customs and superstitions of the people in a civilized society. It included the beliefs and prejudices of these people. When a person wants to understand a certain group of people it is then

necessary to study their folk literature because it mirrors their life as a people.

As among the Ibanags, their folk literature, like any other literature, is the expression of their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, love and hatred, the very ingredients that whipped up all the literary genre handed down to us.

Ibanag folk literature is didactic, moralistic, predominantly sentimental, romantic, socialistic, comic and spiritual – all aimed at uniting them.

METHODS

The study made use of descriptive method research. It is limited only to the folk literature of the Ibanags in three clustered barangays of Tuguegarao City namely: Western Barangays which consist of Cataggaman Nuevo, Cataggaman Pardo, Cataggaman Viejo and Ugac Sur. The Northern Barangay consist of Annafunan East, Annafunan West, Atulayan Norte, Atulayan Sur, Caritan Norte, Linao East, Linao Norte. Lastly Eastern barangays consist of Capatan, Dadda, Gosi Norte, Gosi Sur, Larion Alto, Libag Norte, Libag Sur, Namabalan Norte and Tagga. The list of clusters of the different barangays was provided by the City Planning and Development Office of the City Hall. The respondents of the study and sources of literary pieces were registered senior citizens of the Confederation of Senior Citizens from 22 identified barangays ranging from 60 years old and above who speak the Ibanag language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ibanag Literary Types

There were five literary types gathered by the researcher in this study. These are as follows: poem, proverbs, riddles, songs, and tale. The following are sample of folk literature that were gathered:

Poem: There was only one poem entitled “Sitaw Y Naddianam Mu” (Where did you stay).

Proverbs: There were 33 proverbs, and 13 riddles. There were 22 songs which were entitled: “Y Tagatageno ku” (My dream) ; “Lappaw na Ilang-ilang” (Ilang ilang flower) ; “O lappaw” (Oh lovely flower); “Daddammam Mu agriam Mu Katamman” (Please Don’t forget); “Tu Manoli Y Aya” (That love may return); “Sinagatageno taka wagi” (Gone are the days); “Ke Ziga-riga na palak ku nga neyenna” (How unfortunate am I); “Ariamma Nga Ilogo”(Do not Fail me); “Bannay Na Nono” (Easing of the Mind); “Anni Y Mesimmu” (What will happen); “Y Pacayaya” (The Joy); Magubbaw Ka, Neneng” (Look at Me, Neneng); “Babay nga Masippo” (Kind-Hearted Lady); “Darammagan Ta Umma” (Dew at Dawn); “Kagamanak-Ku Tuttulan” (I Strive); “Ulila (The orphan); “Gosos Ni San isidro” (Hymn to St. Isidore); “Mangarugak” (I Believe); and “Afu Dios” (O Holy Father).

Tale: The only tale was “Nu cunnasi Y nepangnga na Capatan Ta ngagan Na” (How Capatan Got its name).

Themes of the Ibanag Literary Pieces

The themes contained in the literary pieces are: Faith in God, Family solidarity, humility and simplicity, industry, love of knowledge and wisdom, patience and perseverance, reciprocity and justice, unity and cooperation, and love, courtship and marriage. However, not all literary pieces have themes. This means that some literary pieces are just meant for entertainment.

Ibanag Beliefs and Practices

The common prevailing beliefs and practices of the Ibanags revealed in their folk literature under each theme contained in the literary pieces are the following:

Faith in God: Pasion, Padasal, Pa-fiesta

Family Solidarity: Maguddong:Gaku:Makitagallu

Unity and Cooperation: Patuno, Tannawa / Yvvet

Love, Courtship and Marriage: Mangune Gala Mangalawic

They all practice looking for a lucky day by means of referring to the artes, Signos.

CONCLUSION

The Ibanags sing, recite, observe their prevailing folk literature during the Lenten season, the advent season, when they remember their dead or when they give thanks to God for the blessings they receive, the annual patronal fiesta, at funeral wakes, the start of building a house, marriages, times when children get sick, days when they move to a new house, as they throw hot water outside their homes at night, and when they offer food and drinks to appease the spirits

The common beliefs and practices of the Ibanags that are revealed in their folk literature are: passion, padasal, pa-fiesta, maguddong, gaku, makitagollu, patuno, tannawa or yvvet, mangune, gala, mangalawic and they all practice looking for a lucky day by referring to the artes/Signos.

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