

Repercussions of Isinai Lyric Poetry on Culture-Based Values Education

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Abstract - *Lyric poetry is an important manifestation of the people's psychology, character, and individuality. Belonging to one of the ethnolinguistic groups of Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines which embraces a rich lyric poetry are the Isinai who inhabit Dupax del Sur, particularly the barangays of Domang, Dopaj, and Balzain, as well as those found in Barangays Buag and Banggot in Bambang. This qualitative study focused on the folksongs as a literary form evolved by the Isinai in the foregoing setting and how these pieces could contribute to a more meaningful culture-based values education among college students of the Nueva Vizcaya State University-Bambang Campus strategically located at the heart of southern Nueva Vizcaya populated primarily by Igorots, Ifugaos, Ilocanos and Isinai. Key informants divulged published and unpublished Isinai folksongs, whose features as to origin, musical structure, cultural and social traits, and implications to values education, were thoroughly investigated in this study. Problems were identified as an attempt to initially help derive a mechanism which can preserve and promote the Isinai lyric poetry. The findings incited better standpoints on preparing prospective teachers of the university by encouraging them to integrate culture in values education; participation of school administrators and local officials in preserving the Isinai culture; involvement of music and literature teachers and researchers of the university in exploring and promoting the Isinai culture; and supporting the program of the provincial government in preserving Isinai dialect, songs and dances.*

Keywords –Values Education, Culture, Isinai, Poetry

INTRODUCTION

After the Filipino people have witnessed the resurgence in culture and the arts at the advent of their sovereignty from foreign forces, there had been an increased interest in instinctive art, music and literature, particularly on folksongs and ethnic music as forms of lyric poetry. Philippine music which is under the braces of literature, reflects the beliefs, feelings, and aspirations of the people. Through their folksongs, the Filipinos express themselves collectively in response and reactions to the economic and social life of the community, inevitably molding cultural traditions summarizing the Filipino way of life[1].

When an ancient sage once said, "Let me hear a nation's music and I will tell you who its people are," he crisply laid stress on the veritable role of music in defining a country's national identity, in effect pointing to music as the mirror of one's racial image. When commonly shared, preserved and transmitted from one generation to another, the collective store of

the country's social heritage ultimately motivates the achievement of human progress for the entire nation. For Fabian [2], music is a sort of a looking glass that mirrors the soul of a nation.

The folksong reflects the Filipino spirit and the values he treasures most. The folksong, being a means of artistic appreciation and ideals, identifies him from the rest of the world. It has a significant contribution toward the formation of a sound values system and the attainment of moral recovery because it builds the individual's personal identity; enrich his life by developing understanding and perception in his societal environment through sound, color, emotion, thought, and social relationships; and expands his ability to imagine, create and appreciate with discriminative judgment [3].

The Philippines, often referred to as the "Emerald Isles" is composed of more than 7,000 islands which are inhabited by more than 100 big and small ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has its own dialect, has its own customs and traditions, and enjoys its own dances

and music. One of these ethnic groups are the Isinai who inhabit Dupax del Sur, particularly the barangays of Domang, Dopaj, and Balzain, as well as those found in Barangays Buag and Banggot in Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya.

The Isinai belong to a small Philippine ethnolinguistic group whose language is also called Isinai. Before the arrival of the religious missionaries in Luzon during the latter part of the 16th century, this ethnic group was found in a settlement called *Ituy* covering the contiguous municipalities of Dupax, Bambang, and Aritao. As all civilizations originated in navigable rivers, the Isinai were found along the banks of Me-et (Sta. Fe) River, Awa (Pingkian) River, Nambunajan and Matuno River, and all tributaries of the Magat River. The Isinai were formerly called Malaat. They have established trade relations with the Gaddang, conveying their farm crops through the Magat River by means of bamboo rafts [4].

As reflected in their songs, dances, and rituals, the Isinai are a carefree, gay, humble, and hospitable people. They sing to express their joy or sorrow and to express their gaiety during work or when work is done.

Unfortunately, one of the sad aspects of progress is the number of things that are lost to the world in its wake, usually unnoticed or unmourned. The young generation compulsively catches on to every new idea that will lead them toward the future. They have little time to look back to the customs of their forefathers, so carelessly; the customs are allowed to slip away[5].

In the past, life changed more slowly than now and only the adventurous roamed far from the places of their own region, wearing their traditional dresses, working the crafts, singing the songs, and dancing the dances, which were handed down through the ages and could be found in all their natural spontaneity. The Isinai are particularly in songs, but lamentably, are now being forgotten.

It is this light that the researchers have embarked on the qualitative study of the repercussions of Isinai lyric poetry on culture-based values education. This study in particular may help in preparing prospective teachers of the university by encouraging them to integrate culture in values education, participation of the school administrators and local officials in preserving the Isinai culture, involvement of music and culture and supporting the program of the provincial government in preserving Isinai dialect, songs and dances.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In view of the above considerations, this study is focused on the identification of Isinai folksongs of Dupax del Sur and Bambang, analysis of their content and discussion of their implications on the development of cultural values which will form a substantial part of values education among college students at the Nueva Vizcaya State University-Bambang Campus, Philippines. Integration of culture in the curriculum of the university will make it relevant to the learners as the student populace of the university is an intersection of various cultures primarily those who are coming from the Isinai community of southern municipalities of Nueva Vizcaya.

Specifically, this study unveiled published and unpublished folksongs of the Isinai in Dupax del Sur and Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya, and their unique features along background/origin; and musical characteristics; the cultural and social traits that can be derived from these folksongs; the implications of the cultural and social traits derived from the folksongs toward values development; and the problems being encountered by the Isinai regarding the promotion and preservation of their folksongs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research venture made use of the qualitative approach to seek answers to the questions posted using the key informant technique. An effective way to study people's music is to scrutinize the antecedents – lifeways/lifestyles, beliefs, legends, and rituals. Insights into the culture of the Isinai, historical, social, religious, and cultural background of the people were extracted through interviews with experts in Isinai music and literature. This means that throughout this study, the researchers had to observe the way of life of the group, particularly in Bambang where the researchers learned more about the group – their customs, mores, family relationships and traditions. The same was done in Dupax del Sur, which is a 15-20 minute ride from Bambang. They familiarized themselves with the ecology of the environment and tried to understand the passions and joys that move its people.

With the help of Isinai icons in music and performing arts, the informants were identified based on their age, knowledge of the subject, and their willingness to participate in this undertaking.

The informants aging between 65-74 are residents of Bambang and Dupax del Sur, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines who have overwhelming inclination to and experience in music as evidenced by their being composers, directors of musical events not only in the local but also in national scenarios, trainers and conductors of local choral groups and members in various musical organizations.

Informal interviews were conducted to elicit important information from which inferences and insights on the topic on hand were derived.

The results or responses of the informants were qualitatively presented and discussed in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After thoroughly dealing with Isinai musical experts, the following information were gathered to address the problems posted in this study.

Published and unpublished folksongs of the Isinai in Dupax del Sur and Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya, and their unique features along background/origin and musical characteristics?

The informants from Dupax del Sur, presented the following songs:

A. *Kukkuyappon* (The Butterfly)

<i>Isinai version</i>	<i>English translation</i>
Kukkuyappon anmaserot	O beautiful butterfly
Dambaman an-anaposia	I've been looking for you so long
Appeleta di da da mar	I urgently need your help
Mangivolejassiaruar	To express my love to a dear lady
Amta mot di ittuamar	I know where you are now
Diyoy at nanmanliv-livaliw	You're in the midst of
Are-eyan di savuingar	flow'rs so fair
Si gitawrimijalanguar,	Flitting here, flitting there
	In the garden of my fair lady
Kukkuyapponanmaserot	O beautiful butterfly
Maattiw ta diyoysiija	Come, listen to what I say
Iyator mu tiyesulatuar	Please give this letter of mine
Si pinaulearanmariit.	To the girl I love so much
Ittum di pan-engatmuar	You please handle it with care
Etomsimebbes di sulatuar	Hold it tight with all your might
Uansatieyayajajom	
Biviluarmawayinlojom	
Sar-omtyanbasona	Lest you lose it on your way
Risulatuar an iyator mu	She'll never know that I love her,
Santuom di suvvetuar	Please wait for her to read
Mu dawatonariuar,	

Alimbawa ta dawaton
Ammaipseysalamatuar
Maunat Apo tauarDiyos
On siatmiar-arua

Kukkuyapponanmaserot
Serwon ta riinaruar
Ipasyal tat gitawar
Ta pangilansigayjaya

Kukkuyaponmanette a
Belengom di pantaromiar
Ijuyorutmantunat-tunanar

Kukkuyapponanmaserot
Maserotankukkuyappon
Nasompalamindua
Salamatsi, salamatsi
Dada mar.

The note of love that I
expressed
Then ask her how she feels
About the love I offer her

If by chance she accepts my
life
I give thanks to the Lord
above
And to you, dear butterfly,
For helping me win her
heart,

Oh beautiful butterfly
Let's go the girl I love
Let's take her out for a walk
To show my joy and
happiness

Butterfly look at us
Watch me dance with my
love
I pull her close and we sway
Then turn around so
gracefully

O beautiful butterfly
Dear lovely butterfly
My love and I are now one
Thanks to you with all our
heart
Thanks to you

The song was translated by informant Aida C. Mamaoag, who offered the information that this song-dance piece was presented at the Philippine Folk Festival at the Folk Arts Theater in 1977, with the late Estela Guiak Fernandez, as dance director and choreographer. The translation of the song goes this way.

The above mentioned informant narrated that according to the old folks in Dupax del Sur, this song is actually a song and dance piece, which was inspired by the traditional courtship practice of the Isinai, during the early times a couple do not personally meet to express their feelings, they needed a third party – a trusted friend or a relative to mediate or to act as their “bridge” until the girl accepts the love offered by the boy, the third party is represented by the “*kukkuyappon*” or butterfly.

The song is therefore, narrative in nature since the lyrics of the song are actually a song of how the courtship is acted.

In terms of musical characteristics, the rhythm “*habanera*” which is an influence of Latin-Spanish civilization and the melody is simple-repeating alternately music A and music B throughout the song, the last stanza of the song, called the “*coda*” is just a closure of the song; it tells the end of the story.

B. ***Dattut ittuum*** (Where are you?)

A contribution from informant Abraham L. Reyes is a sentimental song which goes this way:

<i>Isinai version</i>	<i>English translation</i>
Dattut ittuum, o bilay u	Where are you my love,
Inaru-arum di satien puso	my only love?
Nirat di sipan muar, an saon si aruom	Whom I love so much with all my heart
Sangkan tuje besam, saon si tinayanam.	You promised me I'm the only one you care
	But now you left me alone, broken hearted and so sad

Dattuttum lugar si aya pangamapan	Where will I find you, how I ever see you
Si inaruan an immaddowi	O my darling one who just walked away
Ejaruan ta lavi eyong-ngauan di saitar patoyar	Every night, everyday, you are always in my mind
	Dreaming will be as one until death will do us part

Nomnomo na mu addawi a	Please think of me when you're far away
Nomnomom pay ri sati gina ar	Remember me and my love for you
Sati pusuar an mandeyoromdom	Doubts are in my heart, it's all because of you
Mibus ysia aajes di pusuar	My dearest one, a special one in my heart

When asked what the song is all about, informant Reyes said that the song is about a forsaken lover, whose loved one left and knows not of her whereabouts, it speaks of sincerity or true love of the boy to the girl as referred to the overused cliché, “Till death do us part.”

As regards the musical characteristics, the song is song moderately slow to keep it aligned to the message of the song, which expresses sadness or sorrow. However, other singers, especially in present time, sing it in the rhythm of “*danza*”, also of Latin influence.

C. ***Uar sipan uar*** (My Promise)

This song was presented to the researcher, Informant Jovita Bersabal, an Isinai from Bambang.

The song runs this way:

<i>Isinai version</i>	<i>English translation</i>
Music A.	My pledge of love to my love one
Uar sipan uar si aruar	It will never fade because you are so dear
Marin manluman toy si-a eman	You're my beloved destined for me
Si atawa an pipiaran	You are mine till the last breath of my life
Mantunat giting di ataya-ar	

Music B.	Oh my happiness cannot be compared
Gayjaryan tua, marin meyowa	Let's take care of I, let's not waste it too,
Engatan ta on ingong-an ta	It's our love that we can't lose at all
Toy mansiari uriam itapli	Let's hold on now and till death do us part
Gogoman mantunat ipatoyta	

Music A.	I will never hurt your feelings
Uriam mos an pan-ipijan	Because my love for you is for eternity
Daraniyen matam on uriam santan	I'll be faithful, I will never change
Urian santan masden sipan	I'll always you until the end of time.
Mantunat giting di atayanar	
(Repeat Music B)	

According to the informant Bersabal, this song was researched by the late Isobelo Gonzales, a well-known Isinai because of his passion in collecting Isinai songs transcribing the lyrics and preparing the musical score. Present day musicians have made arrangements for choral presentation, one way of preserving and promoting his works.

The song's rhythm is waltz or “*balse*” sang in joyful mood to suit the message and the song has music A and B forms to denote division of stanzas.

<i>D. Tayana di Longkosar</i>	<i>English translation</i>
<i>Isinai version</i>	
Music A.	If I'll tell you 'bout my feelings
Mu iptaw u ri gina-ar	My heart will truly be enlightened
Matajpiawan di pusuar	My love for you I'll always treasure
Aruar on pamalear	Cause my love is oh, so true
In-iptaw ur matutuar	
Urian osia on tolangon	
Dajas mu mos akuon	
Nahanap a moss i nomnmom	

<p>Urian man an lojlojmon</p> <p>Music B.</p> <p>Uriana ay an tayanan Toy gina-ar ya marog-anan Nier urum si mangawili Si satien pusum mitapli Pen-neso mos di matoyar Mu si-a lojom di niyapuanor Manggayjar angear siri viopar Mu tayana di longkosar.</p>	<p>Do not take my love for granted Just believe I am sincere You will always be in my mind Please don't think it's all a joke</p> <p>Please don't ever ever leave me Or my life will be in great despair There's no other one I love most That my heart will ever treasure I would rather welcome my death If it's all because of you, my love I'll be happier in heaven above If I leave my sorrows now</p>
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This song is also one of Isobelo Gonzales' collected songs, which informant Albert Bangunan shared. This is a love song wherein the person would prefer to die in order to get rid of the sorrow and pains of a broken heart. It is sung moderately slow and its rhythm is "danza".

Cultural and social traits that can be derived from the Selected Isinai folksongs

Aristotle, the greatest philosopher, as stated by Rivadelo [6] stated "Music hath the power to mold character that being so it is an indispensable study for the young." Maldo [7](2004) stressed that through music, young people grow in appreciation of values. They recognize that genius knows no boundaries; that he finds a wholesome means of self-expression which will meet his immediate and more adult needs and develops in music but in all aspects of life, namely; cooperation, self-control, industry, organization, and respect for others.

The folksongs presented herein, however, are all love songs, exemplifying the Isinai's value for LOVE – love between couples, among family members, love for friends, love of nature, love of country and above all love of God. The song "Kukkuyappon", a courtship song reflects self-determination to obtain the love of the girl, the traditional way. This in turn shows respect for the tradition or custom. The last stanza or coda

likewise shows that the Isinai is grateful and appreciative of any favor he receives.

"Dattut ituam" is about forsaken love, despite being deserted by the loved one, the person still has the hope that someday they will be together. The pledging of the person in the song tells about persistence despite being left alone. The Isinai remains faithful to his loved one.

"Uar Sipan Uar" is all about keeping promises or being truthful to one's feelings; the forsaken one becomes happy, shows trust and appreciation, and has respect of himself and of others, especially the significant ones.

Meanwhile, the song, "Tayana di Longkosar" is a love song about a person's pleading for the love of another person, to the point of preferring to die and experience pain.

While the songs collected or shared by the informants are about love, the values derived from these songs come about because of love. It can be said that the core of all values is love. Because of love, there spring other values such as respect, self-control, loyalty, determination, keeping ones words, peace, hope, cooperation and faith.

Implications of the cultural and social traits derived from the folksongs toward values development

Several implications can be drawn from the collection of Isinai folksongs toward the development of values among the youth. As explained by Eugenio [7], the Philippines has a rich folksong tradition because songs mark every stage in the life of the Filipino – from the time he is born to the time he dies and is buried; and so is the Isinai. This implies that folksongs are a part of his life and therefore, they should learn them and subsequently appreciate them. By singing the folksongs, he absorbs the value embedded in them. As Schinichi Suzuki, the famed violin teacher said, "If a child hears a good music from the day of his birth he learns to play it himself; he develops sensitivity, discipline and endurance; and he gets a good heart".

Similarly, Arellano [8]observed that through folksongs, human feelings are expressed, emotional, intellectual and physical satisfaction is fulfilled. Children's need for aesthetic experience, emotional release, development of sensitivity to beauty, creative expression, relaxation, enjoyable leisure time activities, and for social relationships.

As such, folksongs should be part of the school curriculum in order to provide opportunities to children of all walks of life musical experience that are satisfying. In the past, only children access to the magic touch of folksongs and to develop the natural aptitude and special talent for music.

Since folksongs are value-laden, the teaching of values should be integrated in the music and literature classes of educational programs offered in the university. The appeal of folksongs would be a spring board in the development of values among the youth.

Problems being encountered by the Isinai regarding the promotion and preservation of their folksongs

In an interview with informant Rosenda P. Gundaya, she averred that the most serious problems in terms of the prevention and promotion of the Isinai folksong are the conduct and behavior of today's generation. She has observed that the youth of today live according to dynamics of the modern world that have influenced greatly their choice of reading materials, arts, movies, dance, mode of dressing, and more so with music. They are ashamed to sing and even despise our own folksongs and ethnic music. She even stressed that this is a betrayal of what is truly Isinai.

Informant Deusdedit Marquez added this conduct/behavior of the youth today is attributed to peer and media influence- everything they can hear and see on TV and anything their peers do. They imitate just so that they will be considered "in", otherwise, they will be called "*baduy*." Marquez added that even the parents of these youth could barely sing a folksong. They may be familiar with the melody but not the lyrics; they could hardly pronounce the Isinai words because even if they come from Isinai roots, they speak Tagalog in their home – also an influence of media.

These observations are consistent with the statements of Garcia [9] to wit, "Modern life can be observed to be fraught with experiences that make it ever – increasing in complexity, consequently requiring more individual efficiency in adjusting to varied situation that arise with their current problems." Changes in the daily life of the people have come so fast and thick due to technological advances that have affected the social, economic, religious, moral, educational, and/or physical aspects of our existence.

Garcia [9] further explained that inventions, like the movies and other recreational devices have forced man to dwell in more out-of-the home activities so that the influence of the home and the family has weakened its impact on the individual, in other words, the life that was so simple, as lived by own ancestors, has become really more complex, perhaps more exciting and interesting but more difficult.

Informant Mamaoag revealed that the youth of today are hesitant or even refuse to participate in extra-curricular activities or musical presentation if they learn that the song they will sing are folksongs. She also shared her observation that even in elementary and secondary schools, music, most especially folksongs, not to mention Isinai folksongs are neglected.

This observation runs parallel with that of Fabian [2] that there is considerable evidence, both from official investigations and the schools themselves, that many children between the ages of 13 and 18 either treat with apathy or reject actively, the music teaching provided for them as an integral part of the curriculum. They find music lessons "useless," boring and irrelevant.

Fabian [2] further contends that we are faced with the paradox that while music, specifically folksongs, is an extra-curricular activity and plays an important part in the lives of the majority of our young people, it proves unacceptable to many of them as it is presented in the classrooms. Possible reasons for this apathy and even hostility are revealed in the succeeding paragraphs.

First, the attitude of tertiary students to their music lessons sometimes has its source in the primary schools they have left. In these schools, opportunities for musical experience depend to a large extent upon the ability and enthusiasm of the class teachers who are not music specialists.

Moreover, the musical materials given them for both performance and listening do not always measure up to their emotional and intellectual development.

Lastly, there are parents who regard time apart in music as time wasted and discourage their children to engage in musical activities and to value only those school activities which make an obvious contribution towards their future careers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The folksongs of the Isinai generally deal with love and are narrative in style. In music parlance they are called ballads.

The core cultural/social value reflected in the folksongs is love, from which other values such as respect, self-control, determination, loyalty, persistence, courage, and fidelity emanate.

The appeal of folksongs, through which emotional, intellectual and physical satisfaction is fulfilled, would be a spring board in the development of values among the youth which may be integrated in the music or literature classes of the university.

The preservation and promotion of the Isinai folksongs is hindered by the indifference and even rejection of the youth of today to learn and sing their own songs; the influence of media; peer influence; and lack of opportunities for students to learn the folksongs in school and to showcase them in school and/or community presentations.

It is recommended that the prospective teachers under the education department could have sufficient teaching skills, and desirable attitudes in teaching music and the appropriation for the folksongs of their place. This could be attained through seminars and workshops that would include among others the correct pronunciation, spelling, and stress of Isinai words.

School administrators and local officials may consider among their agenda, the cultural development of the community vis-a-vis the preservation of their folksongs by allotting funds for the research, production and dissemination of the folksongs. They could give incentives to performers in community activities that showcase Isinai folksongs.

Music and literature teachers and researchers of the university along the Isinai culture may be encouraged to continue exploring the Isinai culture especially their songs while there are still living/surviving Isinai who can be their resources persons/informants.

The program launched by no less than the provincial governor, Hon. Ruth R. Padilla, in coordination with Board Member Hon. Merlie G. Talingdan may be supported. The initial summer camp of young children on the Isinai dialect, songs and dances should be periodically undertaken involving not only the young children but all community stakeholders.

A system of compiling, reproducing, and disseminating information about the Isinai culture may

be designed by university organizations aligned to social sciences and literature courses.

Further qualitative studies may be conducted on lyric poetry of Isinai thriving in other parts of southern Vizcaya like Aritao, Dupax del Norte, Sta. Fe, Kayapa and Kasibu. Other key informants may also be included to consider broader and richer experiences in Isinai music.

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