

Socio-Cultural Religiosity In Selected Guindulmanon Folklore

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Abstract

Philippines has been facing a problem on the preservation of her folklores which reflects the culture and tradition of the Filipino and thus putting the national identity at the brink of collapse. In this connection, this study aims to provide enlightenment on the social realities found in Philippine folklore and paves way to the enrichment of the country's cultural heritage and the upholding of the national identity. This study analyzes the socio-cultural religiosity reflected in Guindulmanon Folklore of Guindulman, Bohol focusing on the themes, archetypes of the textual narratives which depict the socio-religious consciousness of the Guindulmanons. The verbal data supporting this assumption is analyzed through qualitative analysis using the theories of mimesis and Jung's archetypal theory. This reveals that the people of Guindulman, Bohol have rich folklore about the existence of engkanto in their community. The dominant themes of the folklore deal with the belief on the existence of engkanto which induces advantageous fear to be people. The folklore also present archetypes which compile the beliefs of the people on the ways engkanto imitate, inflict, enchant humans and how they interact with them in the society. The folklore divulge that Guindulmanons are greatly affected with their primordial beliefs and practices leading them to have split-level of Christianity. In conclusion, the folklore reveal that Guindulmanons have the collective fear leads to the upholding of the importance of virtues such as vigilance, respectfulness, faith in God, trustfulness and discernment in order to establish to peaceful living.

Keywords: Bohol, Guindulmanon Folklore, Guindulman, Oral Literature.

Introduction

These days due to the country's lack of national institutions, the country does not just struggle in the preservation of oral lores but also deems it difficult to find clear and thorough text analysis to those folktales that are collected and archived. (Lopez 24) This eventually tend the people to hardly comprehend what signification the oral lores have.

To provide enlightenment to the Filipinos who are likely alienated to their own culture and tradition which are often reflected in their oral lores (Aquino,v), this study elucidated what socio-religious implications can be derived from the beliefs and practices that are seen in the folk narrative about engkanto of the Guindulmanons. The folk narrative about engkanto are folk narratives which generally tell about engkanto, one of the elementals which are called engkantos in tagalog or di ingon natu in Visayan region. Thus, this studies can be an avenue for people not just to enrich country's cultural heritage, but to discover what identity they keep and to shape a sense of pride to the people that they are.

This assumes that folk narrative about engkanto mirror socio-religious implications which explain the identity and values embraced of the people of Guindulman, Bohol.

This research assumption is anchored on the mimetic theory and Jung's theory of archetypes.

In mimetic theory, humans (Adam 3) are perceived as generally mimetic beings who are embodied with feelings and the impulse to indulge themselves in the creation of text (art). They tend to emulate what exists around them and reinterpret it according to how they perceive the world. Literature, in the light of this theory, copies real-life images where artists make use of characters and situations that reflect reactions to several human crises. In this way, one could say that literature creatively modifies reality into the dimension that captures human interest.

Speaking of imitation as mentioned above, archetypal criticism also views literature as an imitation. According to Walker (17), literature imitates not the world but rather the "total dream of humankind."

Abrams (112) delineates archetypes as "primordial images"; the "psychic residue" that recurs in the lives of people through ages. It is considered to be the "first mold" or "first pattern" that is built up in human life and remains to be the same across cultures and ages. In this manner, archetype can be defined as any repeated universal figure or pattern that comes like a myth that is repeated in

any literary pieces across generations, which would also mean the same kinds of cultural symbols passed on whenever and wherever they exist. They are revealed in myths, religions and folklore, dreams and fantasies, drama, film and other forms of literature. They are believed to arouse deep, emotional response from the readers as it gets into their unconscious memory.

Through the use of the two theories, the socio-religious implications in folk narrative about engkanto will be derived.

Research Methodology

This study uses the qualitative method to analyze the folk narrative about engkanto in Guindulman, Bohol. It focuses on the socio-religious consciousness of the community.

This study compiles the ten folk narratives gathered from ten storytellers who are bona fide residents of Guindulman. The folk narratives are based on what the storytellers have heard, witnessed or experienced about the mysterious concerns or problems that are allegedly due to evil forces of engkanto. These also include the narrations of the people who consulted their problems to those who have the gift to traverse with engkanto known as meriku, tamban or albularyo.

The gathered folk narrative are written in the native texts adapting Boholano-Visayan which are characterized by the use of j for y and h for k. The folk narrative are made according to how the storytellers narrate them to the researcher making the narrations conversational. The native texts are translated in English text for the general readers to understand the folk narrative . The English narrative texts of the folk narrative are used for the analysis on the socio-religious implications of the Guindulmanons which are derived from analyzing the beliefs and practices of the people.

Results and Discussions

Menez (13) in her book, *Exploration in Philippine Folklore* also affirms that folklore assumes a social function. It assumes a big contribution in promoting multicultural curriculum because it can provide excellent materials that could enlighten people about the beliefs, value system and cultural patterns that a specific society has. She also proposes that the peculiarities of individual society that lead to distinct differences in their cultural productions are also reflected in folklore.

In analyzing the folk narrative , it can be seen that Guindulmanons are driven by their conviction that there are other

creatures they are sharing the world with and they call them engkanto as reflected in the ten folk narrative . In the folk narrative , Big Boulder, Elvira, The Passengers, The Gigantic Bird, The Foreigner and Baptism, it is evident that Guindulmanons also believe that engkanto want to be part of the human world and vice versa and this desire as presumed by people leads them to imitate human appearances or animals with bondage or animals with unusual appearances or capability. People also perceive that engkanto are those extravagantly rich mysterious people who are unknown to everybody when they are in their human forms as told in the folk narrative , The Foreigner and Elvira. They act like normal people in the society but their movements are bizarre. Their existence leaves bewilderment in the mind of the people. For instance, they donate big sums of money or unload the unusually luggage of goods. Others participate in whatever activities people have, like voting in the election unknowingly or riding on the passenger bus disguising to be normal people. All these occurrences warn people to be vigilant wherever they go. Others believe that they should bring amulets to prevent spell or a vial with virgin coconut oil that alerts them if there is jatut as extracted in the folk narrative , Big Boulder and The Unseen Playmate. Despite engkanto' way of imitating humans, people recognize engkanto' desires to be part of the human world and vice versa is impossible due to the sanctity of baptism that God bestow onto humans but not to them.

Guindulmanons are also ruled by their assumption that engkanto are punished and swept away by God from heaven resulting them to be in wherever they are believed to reside and are not given the privilege that humans enjoy as highlighted in the orature, The Unseen Playmate. People believe that after disobeying and even betraying Him when engkanto were still in the paradise, engkanto are condemned to dwell in the big black boulders where dakit and bunsay grow, in the mysterious big house built in eerie location, in the cliff, in the big trees, in the springs, in the wide field, in the ricefield, in the caves, or in the mountains as highlighted in all of the ten folk narrative . This sentence they got invokes envy that leads them to hurt humans when they trespass their jurisdiction. That is why, people if necessary get rid of those places. If inevitable circumstances arise, they should be careful not to attract or offend the engkanto; that is why they need to say "tabi." When eating, they even should offer food for engkanto as advised in the ten folk narrative .

Guindulmanons also believe that engkanto bring evil forces that lead them to misfortune or fatality. When a person gets sick or dies from an unknown illness which cannot be identified or cured by the doctors or when something unexplainable or mysterious things happen to him, people would think that the person is enchanted or inflicted by engkanto and to prevent further fatality or to stop it if it is already happening, they ask the help of shamans who are believed to have the power in communicating with the engkanto. The shamans perform buhat-buhat or ting-ting to traverse with engkanto as portrayed in the folk narrative such as Tabi, The Unseen Playmate, The Foreigner, and The Baptism.

Guindulmanons cling to the belief that shamans can communicate with engkanto. They can converse with them even engkanto reveal themselves as spirits. That is why shamans are the ones approached by people when they encounter problems concerning their beliefs about engkanto. Shamans perform a ritual they call ting-ting or buhat-buhat to communicate with engkanto. The shamans during rituals use white wine as they do their chants. They also use a vial which contains herbs mixed with virgin coconut oil as the tool that serves as the medium for engkanto to respond. The vial tied with a string moves depending on the command of the shaman. People believe that shamans are powerful human beings endowed with the gift to heal, to drive away or to tame evil spirits. Shamans serve as their alternative doctor when they resolve this kind of problems.

Guindulmanons also believe that engkanto are fond of making humans as subjects for their delight as narrated in the folk narrative , The Passengers and Estampa. People suppose that they make fun of humans by deceiving them to confuse them or to make them delay their daily activities. If this happens, someone is advised to take off his clothes and wear it again reversely. Due to this tendency, people should not go to places where engkanto live or also pass by and they must pay respect to their holy time or hours. Christmas Day, Lenten Season, fiesta, Tuesdays, Fridays, noontime, 3:00 pm and dusk are the seasons or time when engkanto go out and wander around the human society as warned by the ten folk narrative . People usually delay activities that fall during these periods because engkanto may intervene and bring bad luck. If they go out, they should say tabi. People believe that engkanto are more powerful during their holy hours.

If in case someone gets hurt because of engkanto or someone is enchanted by engkanto, they offer something to the

engkanto in exchange of their wellness. People believe that they need to please engkanto to stop them from bothering humans. Since they are spirits, people assume that engkanto are just after of the aroma of the food. The odor of the cooked white young chicken, fishes with white flesh and white pigs are few kinds of offerings that engkanto love. People offer them to please and to keep them from the haunting the victim they enchant or punish. People believe that engkanto are spirits that can also be pleased by the spirits of things they like. When cooking their offering, people do not use salt because engkanto are afraid of it. People believe that salt is a powerful element that drives away evil forces.

Despite the evil power of engkanto that the people are afraid of, Guindulmanons do not forget that there is Someone more powerful than them. People consider engkanto defenseless over their God as told in the folk narrative , The Gigantic Bird and The Unseen Playmate. They assume that prayers like “I Believe In God” weaken the power of engkanto. When someone is in danger because of engkanto’ evil forces, the one being enchanted by engkanto must call God by reciting prayers especially the Latin ones.

Religion which is defined by Nida and Smalley (4) to constitute a set of beliefs about the unexpected, unpredictable, and mysterious---the uncharted region of human experience is given importance by Guindulmanons because they carry out practice and preserve belief systems that simply coincide to the description that religion covers action and participation due to the adherence of doing on one’s belief.

In addition to what is stated, they also claim that even in the ancient times before official religions dominate the world, people already have religions. This kind of religion is what is viewed by people of this generation to be the “primitive” religions which are commonly observed to be animistic. According to them people have a clear vision of the things they are surrounded and their connection to them through having religious beliefs. They are also guided on how they go along with other people when they cling to these beliefs. Religious beliefs also help them find security in this mysterious world they perceive to be full of fear and worries. Moreover, they provide enlightenment to people as they try to answer questions about human beginnings and their world to come or the dimension of their existence that lays a mystery for them (5). This claim is evident in the community of the Guindulmanons

Looking into the deeper sense of the folk narrative , it is evident that Guindulmanons are still influenced by primitive religion leading them to be superstitious. Guindulmanons still keep high regard to their belief on the existence of supernaturals in this world which they call engkanto. As reflected in the folk narrative , they become conscious about their movements in their own society because the assumption that there are supernaturals that might harm them already has sunk into their mind. They assume trees, boulders, cliffs, springs and other forms of nature to be guarded with powerful spirits that would inflict humans with evil forces if angered, disturbed or even attracted. People in this manner seem to carry the nature-worship because they have to show reverence towards these things. They still perform rituals to tame these spirits where they offer food to pacify their wraths. Others even sacrifice their animals such as the white chickens and pig to please them when they are offended. They say “tabi” when they pass by eerie places which they believe to be the dwelling of engkanto. They bring amulets that serve as alarm for supernaturals. Guindulmanons seem not to mind whether paganistic practices work or not. The practices mentioned above show that their animistic assumptions still dominate their consciousness up to these days despite the widespread influence of Christianity.

The animistic assumptions and practices of the Guindulmanons can be considered a violation to the second commandment of Christian faith which says that followers should not worship pagan gods where engkanto can be categorized. These days, they do not literally kneel down, but considering that they submit to the mentioned tendencies and animistic rituals and practices which confirm their belief on the existence of engkanto, they are guilty to the said offense against Christian faith. This predilection of the Guindulmanons somehow conforms to what Nida and Smalley (5) maintain that even in the prevailing reign of official religions, people are still animistic in terms of their beliefs.

This tendency makes Guindulmanons show their split level of Christianity. La Vina explained that according to Fr. Jaime Bulatao, split level of Christianity is shown through a person who has imbibed in him the coexistence of more than one system between thought and behavior. He points out that a person can follow and can adhere the systems inconsistently. He also pictures that a split-leveled person allows commitment to the dogma of Christianity of the West to rule him but still regards reverence to the primitive worship of his ancestor (The Rappler Homepage).

On the other hand, they confirm that the existence of the Split-level Christianity in young churches affects the strengths of the teachings of the churches resulting Christianity to meet its limit as it touches the lives of the people (173).

The folk narrative about engkanto reveal that Guindulmanons are greatly affected with their primordial beliefs and practices leading them to have disputable Christian faith. Since they cling to these beliefs and practices which are against Christian doctrine, Guindulmanons are seen to have split-level of Christianity

But despite that negative notion, all the beliefs and practices also teaches them ethical values. According to Carthy, folklore can be used to educate people since their stories inculcate the history of human race along with their cultural norms and ethical orientation that includes the virtues such as diligence, respect, perseverance, vigilance to get rid of dangers and other values that humans should cultivate (Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute Homepage). In this way, it is implied that folklores hold themes that teach people how they should live and mingle with each other in accordance to the standards of their society.

Having a closer look to the folk narrative , it is also evident that they induce fear that also teaches people to instill on their mind the importance of virtues in their lives. Because of fear, generally Guindulmanons learn to be vigilant, respectful, faithful in God, trustful, and discerning.

Vigilance is developed by them because they develop consciousness about their actions. They get rid of going to the places where engkanto probably lives. They do not go out or continue to do their works during the holy hours of engkanto. They minimize their brusque manners. They also become watchful about the people who go along with them knowing that their negligence could bring them to misery. They remind themselves about the risks there in deception manifested either through wickedness or feigned generosity.

They also show the virtue of respectfulness. For instance, they avoid hurting animals they see in their society. Others even do not cut down trees that most people believe to be the dwelling of engkanto or do not throw garbage to the spring or abuse it in any ways. People learn to be respectful to all things seen in their society because they have this notion that they are stewarded by engkanto who are willing to punish them when they do offenses.

Faithfulness in God is also invoked by the Guindulmanons with their belief that engkanto could harm them. In times of

helplessness and misery, they call out the name of God. They recite prayers with ardor hoping that His Divinity could save them from any terror. They also have imbibed in themselves that God is omnipotent that He can defeat all evil forces. They even believe on the sanctity of baptism that could never make engkanto part of the human world.

They also become trustful. Despite the lack of scientific proofs and evidences there in the healings or diagnosis done by shamans, Guindulmanons rely on them with trust. They believe on what he can do to solve their problems. They even believe that they are endowed with the gift that science could never explain. They just depend on where faith could take them and what trust could do to them.

Guindulmanons also help themselves to be discerning. Along with their vigilance, they investigate thoroughly what is going around especially when engkanto make fun of them and cleverly find immediate solutions to their problems. They also examine people they mingle with whether he is a jatut or not based on the ways of determining engkanto from humans.

In this light, one can conclude that fear is one of man's initial experiences (Demetrio 23). Fear becomes relevant in the lives of the people because it teaches them values and instill them in their consciousness to avoid danger, misery or misfortune. In other words, people's belief on the existence of engkanto induces fear to Guindulmanons knowing that they possess evil forces that bring them fatality. But this fear takes a positive effect since it leads Guindulmanons to develop virtues that help them live harmoniously.

Conclusion

In conclusion hence, folk narrative about engkanto reflects both negative and positive socio-religious implications about the people of Guindulman, Bohol. The negative connotation says that they have split level Christianity and the positive one affirms that their beliefs and practices lead them to develop ethical values. It reminds people about the significance of folktales as a social function in understanding the cultural behavior of the people and to make them realize the importance of their involvement in enriching the cultural heritage. It serves as a guide for the curriculum planners what to integrate in the curriculum to promote national identity and to preserve Filipino cultural heritage and tradition in order to achieve flexible nation building. However, a need to study the inner psyche

of Guindulmanons is also suggested since it could affect their sense of religion since what primordial beliefs have are contradictory to what Christian faith has taught to people which in some ways distress their sense of fidelity. There would also be an investigation on how modern civilization has penetrated on the culture of people in order to aid the people not to be left behind with globalization while preserving culture.

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