

The Gaddang Legends in the Lens of Structuralist View

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Abstract: *Gaddang literatures as part of the Gaddangs' cultural heritage depict the Gaddangs' ways of life as people, along with work, fun, and frustrations. This study aimed to analyze and interpret the Gaddang literature particularly the legends. This provides a broad interdisciplinary understanding on regional culture and to determine the functionality and significance of the Gaddangs in the province of Isabela. It describes the narrative functions employing the methods by Vladimir Propp as to how the selected Gaddang legends be read in terms of narrative structure, and how these selected literary works be used to inculcate Gaddang identity and worldview. The common narrative functions found were: meditation, exposure, delivery and punishment. The Gaddang legends reflect the historical improvements in their being. The legends have become functional in the conservancy and transmission of the Gaddang culture. Through them, the Gaddangs have been cognizant of Magat, Battalan, Bayun, and all their legendary heroes who epitomize their beliefs and unconventional behavior. In Cauayan City, the Gaddang literatures were preserved and have historical value. It is then compulsory to look back into the richness of the oral literary past in which traditional values, traits and cultural practices are reflected.*

Keywords: Gaddang, legends, literature, structuralist view

1. Introduction

Gaddang tribe is just one of the many ethnic groups that epitomize a minority Filipino population of the old Mountain Province. Gaddang emanates from the word GA meaning "heat of fire" and DANG meaning "burn" or "burned by the heat". The name probably alludes to their skin color, which is darker than any of the native people of the old Mountain Province, the people found in Northern Nueva Vizcaya, especially Bayombong, Solano, and Bagabag on the Western bank of Magat River, and Santiago, Angadanan, Cauayan, and Reina Mercedes on the Cagayan River for Christianized groups; and Western Isabela for non-Christianized communities. Gaddang also refers to a group of Malay with a language of their own known as Gaddang, meaning "along the bank." The Gaddangs are among the indigenous cultural communities in the Philippines blessed with varied beliefs and practices that served as social standards in the community (Philippine Almanac, 1986).

Like the literature of the aborigines in Australia, which is believed to have been contributed to the literature of their country, where their forebears claimed as their pride in their country, the collection of the Gaddang literature is essential in Cauayan City, Isabela due to the vanishing effect of the cultural community of the Gaddangs in the City of Cauayan. Evidently, there seems to be a problem along the preservation of this literature among the Gaddangs because of the foreign influences for their indigenous community, which makes the cultural people lose its cultural heritage.

Literature is life itself. Specifically, the Gaddang literature unfolds the Gaddangs' ways of life to include their beliefs, aspirations, values, ideals, customs and traditions, practices and manner of doing things together. With this, accumulation of literature is indispensable aspect of the cherished cultural heritage of the Gaddang people in the

province of Isabela.

This paper focuses on the culture of Gaddang, particularly their Anthologies. Their literature defines who the Gaddangs are; their identity can be expressed in their work, leisure activities, and their frustrations as well as successes in life.

The focus was only on Gaddang legends since these are rich in cultural practices that could describe the Gaddang community. The legends were chosen according to their availability and appropriateness of reference materials. These must be preserved and compiled in any way possible thinking that the knowledge will no longer be available after many years because of the dying old generations.

This paper aimed to analyze and interpret the Gaddang literature, particularly the legends. This provides a broad interdisciplinary understanding on regional culture and to determine the functionality and significance of the Gaddangs in the province of Isabela. Specifically, this aimed to answer: 1) How can the selected Gaddang legends be read in terms of narrative structure?; 2) What are the narrative functions drawn from the said Gaddang legends?; and 3.) How can these selected literary works be used to inculcate Gaddang identity and worldview?

2. Related Studies and Literature

Relevant studies and literatures were reviewed.

Relative to the study, Grey (2016) studied the Aetas of Central Philippines. She examined the traditional views and practices of the tribal people. Her findings revealed that the traditional views and practices of a tribal group are greatly influenced by various causes, one of which is modernization. Some practices were retained, such as rituals connected to pregnancy, giving birth, matrimony, bereavement and

interment. It is also revealed that tribal people are susceptible to accept the vicissitudes of life. Their traditional practices are hard to disregard since these have been became part of their mores for thousands of years.

A study by Batin (2014) focused on the understanding, appreciation, and interest in the epics, with the most important form of oral literature of the Ifugaos, the epic *Hudhud*. The epic was proclaimed by UNESCO in 2011 as one of the 19 masterpieces of the oral and intangible inheritance of humankind. The analysis was anchored on the theory of the Philippine ethno-epic by E. Arsenio Manuel. Batin employed a descriptive-qualitative approach using random informal interviews, observation, engage in the activities of the subjects in Ifugao, specifically in Lagawe, Asipulo, and Kiangan. He uses textual analysis to determine the structure of the narrative and epic's characterization. He also employed contextualist approach to validate the identified Ifugao culture. He found out that the epic discloses the beauty and heritage of the great ancestors of the highland that need to be protected and preserved. The result of the study helped in the preservation of the sacredness of the tradition and proved that *Hudhud* should not be used as mere tourist attraction of the local government units and the Department of Tourism for economic growth especially in the *Hudhud* areas, but would also attract more scholars, local and international, to understand and preserve the rich and dying tradition.

Tolentino (2017) did a mini-ethnographic study of the Aeta community in Pampanga. His research articulated some of the developments in indigenous peoples' education based on literature, field observation, and interview with Aeta parents and elders. Related here are the contingent issues of these developments, such as language, traditional vs. formal schooling, and the stance or the voice of the elderly indigenous people. A brief reflection on the actions to address the issues of indigenous peoples' education were also presented.

The study of Garcia et al. (2016) examined the beliefs and practices and their social implications in the life of the Agta of Lupigue, Ilagan, Isabela. They used the ethnographic research design. They used tape recorder to document the respondents' beliefs and practices, structured and unstructured interview and participant-observation, and documentary analysis to draw significant data on the origin of the Agta and their community. Findings of the study showed that the Agta people consistently practiced and observed their traditional beliefs and practices. They also maximize the use of the existing resources found in their ancestral areas while preserving ecological sustainability. The study posed a challenge to the social scientist in his role as agent of social transformation.

3. Research Design

This is a descriptive research employing the structuralist approach following the method by Vladimir Propp in analyzing the Gaddang legends. This study identified the

common structures of the legends and their narrative features based on how the stories were constructed.

Vladimir Propp's theory of Russian Fairy tales has thirty-one (31) typical actions, which he called as functions and eight (8) characters, which he called as roles. These served as the bases in determining the narrative functions drawn in the event according to the narrative functions explicated in the theory (Tohar et al., 2007; Coldovero & Aguila, 2020).

In analyzing the texts (legends), it requires one to take a careful look at the character, setting, plot, symbol, and other factors influencing it, like the cultural, historical, and social milieu in which it was created. The researcher identified the Gaddang legends to be analyzed and interpreted. Then, the ways the reading of the said legends in terms of narrative functions were examined. Next, the researcher sketched the overall context in which the reading and analysis appeared. Lastly, after examining the Gaddang legends and developing the answers to the questions, the researcher established into concrete words the interpretation and meaning of the said legends.

4. Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Using the structuralist approach, the Gaddang legends were examined and analyzed.

Table 1 shows the narrative functions scrape together from the Gaddang legends as each function is described in the events.

Table 1: Narrative Functions in the Gaddang Legends

<i>The Legend of Battalan, the Diviner</i>	
Events	Narrative Functions
The legend relates some episodes in the missionary's association with an old man, Battalan, a native of the town.	Initial Situation Preparation
Battalan was believed to have extraordinary powers.	Interdiction
Hunters consulted him; he could predict rain; he could give warnings about unpleasant events that would happen.	Delivery
Some natives believed in him, others didn't.	Exposure
<i>The Legend of Bayun, The Mengal Brave and Strong</i>	
Events	Narrative Functions
In the olden times, the people of Lumabang, now Solano were often raided by the Ifugaos.	Reconnaissance
For quite some time, the people of Lumabang were helpless victims.	Delivery
The Ifugaos robbed them of their possessions.	Trickery
Under the leadership of Bayun, a native who had supernatural power and strength, however, the people of Lumabang fought off the Ifugaos who retreated to the mountains.	Beginning counteraction Departure
The Lumabang village soon became progressive and prosperous.	Victory Liquidation
When the chief of Isabela heard of the mighty powers of Bayun, he sought his help.	The return

Bayun killed their enemy, a giant, by cutting off his leg and beheading him.	Unfolded claims Difficult task Solution
The people of Isabela gave Bayun many presents an appreciation for his help.	Recognition
The Legend of the Magat River	
Events	Narrative Functions
This legend is about the love life of Magat, a handsome young man, who was an obstinate, strong-willed, but gentle fellow.	Initial situation Preparation
He saved a lovely young maiden from a python as she was taking a bath in a stream.	Meditation Victory
The two fell in love. The maiden agreed to marry Magat if he promised never to see her during mid-day.	Liquidation
At first, the arrangement work, but curiosity got the better of Magat. He peeped into the room of his wife one day and discovered that she turned into a crocodile.	Unrecognized Transfiguration
Upon the discovery of her real self, the wife died.	Exposure
Magat buried her in his front yard and drowned himself in the same stream where he had saved his wife from the python. The stream gradually became a mighty river. Today, it is known as the Magat River. As the river swells every year, people interpret this as the rage and lament of Magat who would like to get the bones of his wife; hence, the Magat River keeps moving towards the town of Bayombong.	Punishment
The Beautiful Sirena of Mabalit in the Magat	
Events	Narrative Functions
Sirena is the local term for mermaid, a beautiful maiden who lives underwater.	Initial situation Interdiction
She is allegedly responsible for the frequent ultimately disappearance of human beings-babies, children and adults, alike.	Absentation
It is said that in the olden days, the Sirenas would join religious processions during which they would cause the sudden disappearance of people.	Violation Delivery
Some people would reappear after a few days but they were insane.	Struggle
People never knew where those who disappeared went, but on one occasion, a fisherman reappeared and told of the kingdom of mermaids under water.	Exposure
The fisherman, however, died in the midst of his narration.	Punishment
The Legend of Mambag, the Giant	
Events	Narrative Functions
There was a man by the name of Mambag, who came from Camarag, then capital of Nueva Vizcaya, now in the province of Isabela. He was a great giant, ten meters tall with five centimeters long eyelashes, a grizzled a breast and a bellowing voice.	Initial situation Interdiction
He was the terror of Bayombong and neighboring towns. He lived in a cave in the Luyang Hill on the other side of the Lanug River.	Delivery
He ate one animal at each meal.	Villainy
The people feared this devouring terror and worried about the dwindling number	Meditation

of their animals. So they decided to kill him.	
With Abbaccan heading the expedition and well-armed with bolos, lances, bows and arrows and spears, they gathered and went to his abode.	Beginning counteraction Transference
But they fled as fast as their heels could carry them because they could not imagine anything that could possibly hurt this monster. Their fear increased when they heard his big booming voice.	Struggle
At present, one can see in front of the cave the two tall rocks arranged in a triangle in which he used to place the animals which he killed for his meals in front of the cave. At his death in one of his convulsions, he kicked the other rock, which was thrown to a distance of a kilometer. This rock is now seen in the rice field of Jose Cutara, the diminutive strong man.	Punishment
The Legend of the Huge Snake	
Events	Narrative Functions
This legend is about a huge snake, which was 24 meters long and one and a half meters in diameter.	Initial Situation
This monster, which roamed the barrios of Bayombong during the Spanish times, however, was quite harmless, but had some powers.	Delivery
Any blade of grass it touched as it crawled would die for good.	Complicity
People looked forward to its coming.	Meditation
They would meet it with a drum and brass band and would follow its route until it would disappear behind the chapel of La Torre.	Transfiguration
The Gaddangs associated the huge snake which made regular visits to the chapel with the presence of the image of the Patron Saints of La Torre, the Immaculate Concepcion, whose statue steps on the head of the reptile.	Recognition

Most of the legends culled by Lumicao-Lora (1984) from Gaddang elders appear to have gained currency during the Spanish period, like *The Legend of Battalan, an Old Diviner* from Bayombong, and *The Legend of the Huge Snake*, which alludes to the Immaculate Conception, which has sole power over this snake. However, there are legends that may date back to pre-Spanish times likes the *Tale of the Origin of the Magat River*.

This research used the six (6) Gaddang legends as springboard for analysis: 1) *Legend of Battalan, the Diviner*; 2) *The Legend of Bayun, The Mengal Brave and Strong*; 3) *The Legend of the Magat River*; 4) *The Beautiful Sirena of Mabalit in the Magat*; 5) *The Legend of Mambag, the Giant*; and 6) *The Legend of the Huge Snake*.

As illustrated in Table 1, Initial Situation/Preparation appeared in *The Legend of Battalan, the Diviner* as the first narrative function. This narrative function refers to the legend's relations to some episodes in the missionary's association with an old man, Battalan, a native of the town. Interdiction followed then. Battalan was believed to have extraordinary powers. Consequently, the next function

Delivery became visible, when the hunters consulted Battalan; he could predict rain; he could give warnings about unpleasant events that would happen. Then, there was Exposure, since some natives believed in him, others didn't.

In *The Legend of Bayun, The Mengal Brave and Strong*, the first narrative function was the Reconnaissance, which states that "In the olden times, the people of Lumabang, now Solano were often raided by the Ifugaos." Delivery came next in "For quite some time, the people of Lumabang were helpless victims." Then, Trickery occurred, when the Ifugaos robbed them of their possessions. The narrative functions Beginning Counteraction and Departure appeared next. Under the leadership of Bayun, a native who had supernatural power and strength, however, the people of Lumabang fought off the Ifugaos who retreated to the mountains. The narrative functions Victory and Liquidation came after. The Lumabang village soon became progressive and prosperous. Then the hero returns, when the chief of Isabela heard of the mighty powers of Bayun, he sought his help. Unfolded claims, Difficult task and Solution became visible, Bayun killed their enemy, a giant, by cutting off his leg and beheading him. Later, Recognition appeared, when everyone realizes that the hero is the hero through his special mark, then they got the right solution or through a mere recognition. The people of Isabela gave Bayun many presents an appreciation for his help.

In *The Legend of the Magat River*, there was also an Initial Situation/Preparation. The legend is about the love life of Magat, a handsome young man, who was an obstinate, strong-willed, but gentle fellow. Meditation and Victory followed then, when Magat saved a lovely young maiden from a python as she was taking a bath in a stream. The two fell in love. The maiden agreed to marry Magat if he promised never to see her during mid-day, which is the Liquidation. Next narrative functions, were Unrecognized and Transfiguration. At first, the arrangement work, but curiosity got the better of Magat. He peeped into the room of his wife one day and discovered that she turned into a crocodile. There was an Exposure after, when the discovery of Magat's wife real self, she wife died. Punishment came after, since Magat buried her in his front yard and drowned himself in the same stream where he had saved his wife from the python. The stream gradually became a mighty river. Today, it is known as the Magat River. As the river swells every year, people interpret this as the rage and lament of Magat who would like to get the bones of his wife; hence, the Magat River keeps moving towards the town of Bayombong.

In *The Beautiful Sirena of Mabalit in the Magat*, there was also an Initial Situation and Interdiction became visible. Sirena is the local term for mermaid, a beautiful maiden who lives underwater. Next, there was Absentation. The Sirena is allegedly responsible for the frequent ultimately disappearance of human beings-babies, children and adults, alike. Violation and Delivery appeared next, since it is said that in the olden days, the Sirenas would join religious processions during which they would cause the sudden disappearance of people. Struggle and Exposure were the next narrative functions found. Some people would reappear

after a few days but they were insane. People never knew where those who disappeared went, but on one occasion, a fisherman reappeared and told of the kingdom of mermaids under water. Finally, Punishment came. The fisherman, however, died in the midst of his narration.

In *The Legend of Mambag, the Giant*, there was a man by the name of Mambag, who came from Camarag, then capital of Nueva Vizcaya, now in the province of Isabela. He was a great giant, ten meters tall with five centimeters long eyelashes, a grizzled a breast and a bellowing voice. These were the Initial situation and the Interdiction in the event. Then, Delivery, Villainy and Meditation occurred. He was the terror of Bayombong and neighboring towns. He lived in a cave in the Luyang Hill on the other side of the Lanug River. He ate one animal at each meal. The people feared this devouring terror and worried about the dwindling number of their animals. So they decided to kill him. The next narrative functions revealed were Beginning counteraction and Transference, when Abbaccan headed the expedition; they were well-armed with bolos, lances, bows and arrows and spears, they gathered and went to the giant's abode. After that, struggle and punishment appeared. But they fled as fast as their heels could carry them because they could not imagine anything that could possibly hurt this monster. Their fear increased when they heard his big booming voice. At present, one can see in front of the cave the two tall rocks arranged in a triangle in which he used to place the animals which he killed for his meals in front of the cave. At his death in one of his convulsions, he kicked the other rock, which was thrown to a distance of a kilometer. This rock is now seen in the rice field of Jose Cutara, the diminutive strong man.

In *The Legend of the Huge Snake*, there was also an Initial Situation, that this legend is about a huge snake, which was 24 meters long and one and a half meters in diameter. Delivery, Complicity and Meditation came next. This monster, which roamed the barrios of Bayombong during the Spanish times, however, was quite harmless, but had some powers. Any blade of grass it touched as it crawled would die for good. People looked forward to its coming. Transfiguration followed after, when they would meet it with a drum and brass band and would follow its route until it would disappear behind the chapel of La Torre. Later, there was Recognition. The Gaddangs associated the huge snake which made regular visits to the chapel with the presence of the image of the Patron Saints of La Torre, the Immaculate Concepcion, whose statue steps on the head of the reptile.

As revealed also in Table 1, the researcher found out that the Gaddang legends have common narrative functions such as meditation, exposure, delivery and punishment.

The Gaddang culture seemed to have lost and forgotten their cultural practices. As revealed by the indigenous Gaddang people during an interview with them, the cultural artifacts were not preserved because the indigenous community was easily magnetized by the modernization considering that Cauayan City is fast developing city as it is envisioned to become an Ideal City of the North where it becomes the melting pot of the region that easily attracts tourists from the

different parts of the Philippines where both local and foreign investors establish business at the City for commercial or trading. In effect, out of 65 barangays of Cauayan City, only 17 barangays were identified where Gaddang communities left according to the census made by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples at Cauayan City Service Area. Hence, the cultural extinction led the NCIP to undertake a cultural mapping as an 'action journey' undertaken to identify, investigate or reclaim the worth and importance of the Gaddang culture. Hence, the study on the anthology of the Gaddang literature was prepared and employed the cultural mapping to recognize, protect, and promote the rights of the indigenous cultural communities.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This research is an attempt to read the Gaddang legends using structuralist approach. Based on the analysis and interpretation presented, the following have been concluded:

- The Gaddang legends were read through the lens of structuralist view using Vladimir Propp's theory of Russian Fairy tales, which has thirty-one (31) typical actions, which called as functions and eight (8) characters, which called as roles. These served as the bases in determining the narrative functions drawn in the event according to the narrative functions explicated in the theory.
- The narrative functions drawn from the Gaddang legends were: Interdiction, Violation, Reconnaissance, Delivery, Trickery, Complicity, Villainy, Meditation, Beginning Counteraction, Departure, Transference, Struggle, Victory, Liquidation, The Return, Unrecognized, Unfounded Claims, Difficult Task, Solution, Recognition, Exposure, Transfiguration and Punishment
- The Gaddang legends reflect the historical improvements in their being. The legends have become functional in the conservancy and transmission of the Gaddang culture. Through them, the Gaddangs have been cognizant of Magat, Battalan, Bayun, and all their legendary heroes who epitomize their beliefs and unconventional behavior. In Cauayan City, the Gaddang literatures were preserved and have historical value. It is then compulsory to look back into the richness of the oral literary past in which traditional values, traits and cultural practices are reflected.

5.2 Recommendations

As observed, the Gaddang today practice their traditions and customs especially in the far-flung barrios while most of the Gaddangs in town no longer adhere to these customs because they are economically rich and educated and this initiated modifications in their traditions and practices. In cognizance with the findings of this research, the following were recommended:

- It is imperative that since the Gaddang were the original settlers in Cauayan City, the people who inhabit the place need to read and study the Gaddang literature as a means

of understanding them as people: their hopes, their dreams, their aspirations and their beliefs.

- The Gaddangs today should study their folklore not in terms of its uses in the past but in terms of its functions in the present as the encapsulated wisdom of the ages.

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