

Into The Woods: A Motif Mainstreaming of “Imontanosa’s” Eschatological Legends

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Abstract

A noteworthy body of traditional legends in the Philippine hinterland exists, but these narratives are very challenging to locate, because they are out of print, and/or excluded from the local literature anthologies. This study focused on the survey of selected eschatological legends that are untold, published and unpublished in the contemporary society today. Sociological approach that examines the cultural context through narrative inquiry is used in this qualitative study. Specifically, it presents the findings of an extensive survey of the selected tales translated in English and analysis on their cultural connotations; it offers also the classification of these eschatological legends and their arrangements by geographical regions with in the province of Mountain in (CAR) Cordillera Administrative Region and provides a thorough narrative analysis based on Thompson’s Motif Index in Folk Literature. Ninety eight traditional tales were chosen according to the selection criteria, grouped according to Eschatological Legend category by Linda Degh, classified according to Stith Thompson’s motif indexing. Although there are multitudes of motifs revealed in the narratives, it was found out that common motif in the selected narratives are concentrated on mythological. Cultural connotations are concentrated on “Og-ogfo” (sharing), sanctity of culture, role of men and women in the family, practice of naming places based from the legends and, lastly, the performance of rituals.

Keywords: Mainstreaming, Eschatological Legends, motif, Stith Thompson’s Motif Indexing, Imontañososa

Introduction

The selected eschatological legends of Mountain Province in the Philippines are rarely included in some published books by local authors. One possible explanation is that they are not readily available. In fact, numerous folk tales are transferred orally among the “Imontañososa” (people of Mountain Province), however, they are not documented nor translated in English. It is therefore pointed out that folktale particularly in Mountain Province need to be preserved to avoid from disappearance as an effect for globalization and profitable or money-making amusements. In connection, the necessity of eschatological legends preservation does not only concern to the sustenance of culture and heritage but it goes way beyond. Folktale supports and encourages so many other things if used carefully. From among the numerous researches, it was perceived and studied that folktales explain and impart ethical meanings, development and establishments of one’s attitude, introduce self-fortitude, upright and virtuous judgment, and portray uniqueness

of culture, and also impart value of kindness which is an indications to a certain country's inspiration with incomparable cultural standards as mentioned by Babalola and Unanuga (2012); Kirmani and Freiman, (1997.)

Stith Thompson as cited by Eugenio (2005) defined legend as an account of a strange and unusual happening believed to have actually occurred. It may be an explanation and justification of something which transpired and materialized during the ancient times at a particular place. A legend which has attached itself to that locality will probably also be told with equivalent faith and belief of many other places. It will be observed that legends are nearly always simple in structure and narrative organization, usually containing but a single story design and theme. Legend is traditional story of long ago which is not definitely true. According to Stith Thompson every legend purports to be an account of an unexpected happening believed and understood to have actually occurred. Still on Eugenio, she cited from Linda Degh's (1972) "Folk Narrative", "that the aim of the legend then is to answer an unuttered question about man's micro cosmos. What is it? Why is it so? What can be done about it?" The legend explains an extraordinary phenomenon or a memorable event, it communicates traditional learning and knowledge to the young and the uninitiated, it advises people how to act in critical situations and warns them against doing the wrong thing. This educational essence is dramatized by an example that is the narrative content of the legend.

Stith Thompson's Folktale Classification System

Motif indexing is the process of breaking down a story into its smallest individual components (motifs) and arranging these pieces into an organized structure. Classification is systematically and logically important in any areas that possess an outstanding body of substances in order for it to be seriously incorporated as an entity of study (Thompson, 1951). Therefore, the content of every narrative legend must be divided and reduced known as classification.

Table 1: The Effective Definition of Thompson's Motif in a Folktale

Thompson's Folktale Class	Operational Definition	Groups
Motif	A. Consist of actors, incidents and items B. Supports the tale type by providing extra arrangements of the legends C. Capable to exist independently in its own rights as a tale	A: Mythological motifs, B: animals, C: taboo, etc

Linda Degh's Legends Classification System

Linda Degh identified Eschatological Legends as explanatory stories about origins and classified it into the following categories: (1) stories about the origin of the place, (2) the origin of things, (3) striking natural phenomena, (4) unusual geographic formations, (5) and the nature of plants and animals as presented in table 2.

Table 2: The Eschatological Legends Categories

Linda Degh's Legends Class	Categories
Eschatological Legends	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stories about the origin of the place 2. Stories about the origin of things 3. Stories about the striking natural phenomena 4. Stories about the unusual geographic formations 5. Stories about the nature of plants and animals

Objectives of the Study

Based on the above background information, there are problems that are formulated. First, it is essential to collect and document the eschatological legends of Mountain Province and categorize them according to the "Classifications of Legends" of Linda Degh; secondly, to classify, arrange, and define the selected eschatological legends of Mountain Province through Stith's Thompson's "Motif Index of Folk Literature"; and lastly, to explore the cultural connotations of the narratives in terms of practices, beliefs, traditions, and behaviors.

Research Methodology

In the present study, qualitative method is used in analyzing the collected narratives from Mountain Province. It involves the exploration of different legends from the ten (10) municipalities of Mountain Province using what was developed by Stith Thompson to break the legends down into their basic motifs. This process will demonstrate the usefulness of content analysis in describing both the common motifs found in the legends. Literary reviews, translations, audio recordings, social media and web pages were used. Sociological approach is also used to interpret the social content of "Imontañosas" legends to examine its implication to the cultural aspect of the province as a whole.

Results and Discussions

The selected eschatological legends of Mountain Province are arranged by geographical settings and Motif from the different municipalities of Mountain Province. To sum it all, there are around ninety eight (98) narratives categorized as legends collected, selected, and documented from the entire ten (10) municipalities of Mountain Province in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). In using what was developed by Stith Thompson the "Motif Indexing", the index catalogues motifs that appear in many different folk traditions by categorizing them into parts; for instance, one group deals with motifs that involve myth, animals, another deals with family relationships, magical helpers, taboo, sex, and so on. A motif itself is basically a chunk of information that appears in a tale; can be a character, a place, an action, etc. The Motif-Index is quite lengthy but the focus only of this paper, it is only focused on the common motifs found in the whole eschatological legends of Mountain province which are also commonly found in folk literature from other traditions in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Table 3. The table presents a brief summary of the eschatological legends collected and documented from the ten municipalities of Mountain Province.

Geographical Setting in Alphabetical Order	Total No. of Legends Collected
<i>Barlig</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Bauko</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Besao</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Bontoc</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Natonin</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Paracelis</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Sabangan</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Sagada</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Sadanga</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Tadian</i>	<i>7</i>
	<i>Total: 98</i>

Cited from Eugenio's "The Legends" (2005), she posed a question as to how does classification of legends compare with the classification systems in the West. According to Linda Degh, an international committee identified four tentative categories of legends in 1963. One of the four categories is the eschatological and etiological legends to which the paper is based from. The table below will present the ninety eight (98) legends that were collected and categorized under the eschatological category.

Table 4: Classifications of Eschatological Legends According to Degh's "Category of Legends"

The Category of Legends	Number of Legends
<i>1. Stories about the origin of the place</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>2. Stories about the origin of things</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>3. Stories about the striking natural phenomena</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>4. Stories about the unusual geographic formations</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>5. Stories about the nature of plants and animals</i>	<i>17</i>
	<i>Total: 98</i>

Using Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk Literature, motifs that appear in each story were studied and analyzed and compare each of the tales selected from the municipalities of Mountain province. The analysis of motifs will break the content of the tales down into manageable portions, a process useful, in the next section, in attempting to draw connections between bits of meaning to come up with cultural connotations based on each municipality's beliefs, traditions, customs and behavior as depicted from the stories presented.

Common Motifs in the Eschatological Legends

1. Mythological Motif

Based from the legend's content analysis, common motifs were found in the eschatological legends of Mountain Province. The motif that appears dominantly in the tales is an extremely common one, identified by Thompson as A-, mythological motif: a motif that deals with the creation which involves the gods, goddesses, deities, cultural heroes, etc. . . . This motif is found in every legends and myths from different cultures thus, it is extremely a

popular motif in Mountain Province. This motif, however, is presented with some specifically Bontok twist:

In the olden days, there lived the son of God called Lumawig (A125:Deity in human form)) who came down to earth in search for a wife (T111.1: Marriage of a mortal and a god)). It was in Bontoc where he found a life time partner who lived at Kal-lat. (The Origin of the Stone of Kallat. Bontoc)

These particular descriptions utilize specifically a Bontok formulation, such as the description of “Lumawig,” to describe a sun god who gave everything to the Bontok people.

With the abundance of foods all around, the people became lazy and lax. They did not attend to their fields (kaingins), and every day they spend so much for fiestas (P634). They did nothing but eat and drink, and they forgot to make offerings to the great Lumawig. With this, he then asked his father Kafunyan to punish (Q321: laziness punished) the people for their laziness. ...Due to Lumawig's anger (A102.17: Anger of god), he then curses the people by sending in pestilence (Q595: loss or destruction of property as punishment).

Another narrative from Barlig legend shows the names of their popular mythological gods that are common in their own legends.

Supreme Being (A101: supreme god)) as could be proven in the various descriptive names they have attributed to Cabigat (A125: Deity in human form)). The names of the gods (A2: multiple creators) given were not limited to the following creator's companions (A30: creator's companions): Mamayang (the life-givers), Omos-oschong (the watcher of overall things), Fumayug, the creator(A0: creator)), Nan An-na, literally meaning the one/ the Supreme Being(A101: Supreme god), Sumugsug-ang (the merciful) and Cafuniyan (god). The plural of Cafuniyan is Cacafuniyan of Ca-cafu-cafuniyan.

Religiously, the people of Mountain province believe in the existence of a Supreme Being which, in a way, has brought out some similarities of the Igorots in Mountain province and the neighboring Igorots in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in terms of their religious beliefs.

2. Animals

Another extremely common motif found in the legends of Mountain Province is the presence of an animal helper classified as motif B300, specifically in the municipality of Bontoc where dogs were mentioned, in Tadian, an enchanted eel is also mentioned, and in Sagada, a rat was mentioned in one of their legends to name a few. In Besao, Comiyap is an example of a helpful animal:

Comiyap (D101: transformation: god to animal) landed in Bauko, a town in the Province of Bontoc. He was in the form of a tiny four-legged animal. He hid himself in a big hollow tree. At night, Comiyap shouted at the top of his voice. The barrio was filled with a queer noise that disturbed the people in their sleep. (The Legend of Comiyap: Besao)

Another story from Bauko that provides a motif of an animal helper:

As the dog (B421: helpful dog) dug a small groove, water slowly sprung beneath to fill it to its brim. The dog then dipped its tail into the groove of water and through its tail, set drops of water to ooze into the mouth of his master. With it, the hunter eventually regained consciousness and managed to walk back home. (The Legend of Cotcot aso: Bauko)

In some legends from Barlig:

One of the dogs (B211.1.7. speaking dog) met him yelping joyously as if to say, "master where in earth you have been? We had been waiting for you here is your game." (A Hunter from Lofoc: Barlig)

Another story from Barlig:

The dragon (B11: Dragon) was very big, it looked like a lizard and it eats people. The dragon was also the one who scattered the people who were living here in Barlig, so they went to live in different places like Namilikian, Tanodan and Ferwang. (The Dragon: Barlig)

3. Taboo

A story in Barlig shows how taboo motif is depicted:

There was one family with four children, three girls and one boy who was just beginning to walk. One day their mother told them to take care of their baby brother so that she could go dig camotes. She advised them saying, "don't you go away because someone will enter our house and eat our food and I will not stay long but return quickly. And if later the water becomes warm you may go to bathe you younger brother at the spring but do not go to bathe at Pikak because it is forbidden (C615: Forbidden body of water) place as it is deep, slippery, and to be feared because of the still water." They replied, "yes."

4. Marvels

In the story from Sagada:

Long before our generation, there lived an old couple who had been married for many years but never had a child. Both man and woman desired to have a baby but for many years, the woman had been barren. They earnestly prayed and offered sacrifices to Kabunyan, asking for a child, even if it's a pisi – that is, half a body (F525: Person with half body). It was not very long before the woman gave birth to a baby boy who was exactly one half of a boy. In spite of his appearance, his parents were overjoyed. He was called Pisi.

In Bontoc about the story of the Origin of Kilaw and Pisit:

An in-ina (old woman) was called to communicate with the anitos (F403: Good spirits of ancestors) to ask what the people must do to drive away the pestilence. The spirit advised the old woman to tell the elders to make the town offer a mangmang to Lumawig.

In Sadanga:

One day the guy went on hunting trip (F679.5: Skillful hunter) which took him too long before he came home. In one particular place overlooking the village called "opokan". The maiden was seen pensively sitting on a stone under the shade obviously waiting her lover to return. It must have taken her several hours waiting that she became impatient. She kept on sighing.

4. Sex

Another common motif in the legends of Mountain Province is on Sex which Thompson identified under letter T. Falling in love (T10) as depicted in the Legend of the Orange Tree from Bauko:

Many years ago, there lived in a small village of Palay a group of consisting of only a few families. Among this small tribe of people lived a man named Masedman who was loved by two women. The names of these women were Baddasan and Kayman. Baddasan, being more beautiful, won the love of Masedman and they were married.

As depicted in the story “The Love of Cayam” from Barlig:

There was young man who courted a young maiden. While the two grew more and more in love with each other, the parents of the girl grew more and more resentful of the suitor for he was the son of one of the families who had the least in life. At first, it was to the girls that her parents often strongly expressed their disapproval of the courtship, but when they found that all their words were being ignored, they turned to the young man.

Another common feature under this motif is the (T111: Marriage of mortal and supernatural being) as depicted in the story “A Hunter who Married a Deer” from Barlig:

Ogsang nodded and smiled at him sweetly. Carayyo was amazed by her beauty and manners that he could no longer hold his feelings. “Ogsang,” he stammered and could not continue because shyness took hold of him again. He remembered how the girls in their village made fun of him whenever he expresses his love. What if this beautiful maiden would reject him? Oh! He cannot bear it; he had been rejected many times. “What is it?” Ogsang replied. Carayyo replied slowly, “would you hate me if i ask you to marry me? Ogsang giggled and smiled at him that made Carayyo even more at a loss to continue. He fell dumb. “Go ahead,” Ogsang entreated him again. His heart was beating rapidly because he dreaded the verdict of his answer. Then Ogsang looked seriously at him and said, “Yes, I will marry you.”

Love at first sight (T15) is depicted in the story from Sagada “Al-alaan”:

Meanwhile, a very handsome young man named Gatan heard the story of Bangan. He lived in the village of Maudan. He decided to pursue Bangan and try his luck. She accepted him at once and when Gatan asked her to marry him, she consented. The wedding was a huge feast. They soon were blessed with a baby boy and their life seemed perfectly happy and full of love.

and Man falls in love with woman he sees bathing (T16) :

When they were through bathing they picked up their wings and put them on. All the maidens flew up into the sky except one who could not find her wings. When she find out how futile her search was, she sat down and begun to weep. The hunter, seeing all this, took pity on her and came out of his hiding place to approach her. He persuades her to come along to his house and finally he convinced her to marry him. (The Star Wife: Bontoc)

5. Society

Another common motif in every story is the feast / wedding ceremony (T135).

One day one of the villagers invited the husband because there is an occasion called “jumnu” (P634: feast). Then the husband go and do the “ayeng” (a chant done by the elders) where he told what is all about the “tag-ong” and the “vanew” which Kopkopatti gave him, that should not be boasted upon because it is sacred and the magic will be gone.

6. Nature of Life

In a story from a Bontoc origin entitled “The Legend of Ngawit and Khayapon” (Cawed. 1972), this motif was exemplified:

Man and woman looked at each other mute with love that grew in their hearts. So a love was born, only to be denied by the youth’s arrogant and powerful father. He (Ngawit) was forbidden to love the poor girl Khayapon and as a kachangyan (rich) (U61.1: Why are some people rich and others poor?) he was betrothed

to a rich relative.

This legend further reveals the truth about the existence of two distinct social classes of Bontoc, the kachangyans and the posi (poor) which is very similar to the caste system of India about the untouchables that it was a taboo to marry outside one's class. Although there are twenty three (23) motifs grouped by Stith Thompson, the following motifs presented are the most common legends around the municipality of Mountain Province which in fact, common also to some other legends around Philippine traditions.

Cultural Connotations of the Legends of Mountain Province

Practice of Sharing

This is what the "Imontañosas" called as "og-ogbo/ og-ogfu" which is portrayed in every story. The people of Mountain Province have to share what they have as long as there is to be shared from among the people of the place. It is already a practice among the people of Mountain Province to help those who are in need. It is usually observed during work, during wakes and funerals, when there is a calamity. In the western side of Mountain Province, this is called the "binnadang" which is considered as a collective and unwritten initiative to extend ones' labor and strength for the good of the community.

Common and shared work is when a congregation will takes place to achieve and complete every tasks within the community or to hold a competition among the residents themselves. A number of cultures have such gatherings, often for the purpose of providing a manual labor not only within Mountain Province but to the entire tribes within the Cordillera hinterlands.

Sanctity of Culture

Culture is understood to be sanctified for it holds the different views, ethnicities, conducts, customs and faiths of the people which reflect their features and characters. The people of Mountain Province no matter what tribe they belong respected their own culture because they truly believe on the practice of "lawa/inayan" (taboo) to the western part of Mountain Province, "nga-ag" (taboo) to the central part, and "ngawi-ngawi" (taboo) which is always connected with their own beliefs. In a legend of central Bontoc, marriage or close bond between a brother and a sister is a taboo in the community. In a Sagada's story, actions of a god show that close bond between siblings are also a taboo and very much unacceptable in the community.

Practice on the Conservation of Environment

From interviews, ancestors have protected and preserved the environment because they have an intense sense of commitment in the preservation of nature. To the "Imontañosas", the land, the forest, the waters coupled with social institutions, the rituals and traditions are sacred parts of community life that are preserved and handed down to another.

Natural surroundings and the otherworldly beliefs and practices are often interconnected in a communal relationship. Indigenous cultures recognize a sanctified or consecrated interconnectedness to the nature as well as to the spiritual economic and social life and the unrelenting subsistence of the people.

Role of Men and Women in the Family

The role of men and women is very much emphasized in the stories. For some men's role as mentioned in the legends of Bontoc is proliferation. Wife to bore him children is very much emphasized in the narratives. A husband is depicted as a good one who provides a home for his entire family and their necessities. A proper celebration which among the Bontoks termed it as

“chomno” should be conducted in marrying a woman after asking her from her father’s hand. From this custom, it shows the paternal authority of the father to his family.

Women’s role on the other hand is specifically mentioned too. As usual, women in general have a character trait that focuses on obedience. Women in Mountain Province should obey their husbands and serve their needs; failure to conform is an ample cause for separation. Women in all the stories have common character traits that include patience, industrious, and self-sacrifice.

Practice of Naming Places based from the Legends

Since the stories talk about the origins, the places in the collected stories were named based on the historical events it holds or language confusions from visitors who visited the places during the earlier years.

Practice of Ngilin or Tengao (Rest Day)

This is usually depicted in the stories around the province especially after planting season or harvesting season. In some other places it is practice if something happened in the village that causes the villagers to have rest day.

Performance of Rituals

Performance of rituals is depicted in the stories. One significant ritual mentioned in the some stories is the “cañao”, “mangmang”, or “bayas” (feast). These are all associated with stories connected to “Lomawig” or “Kabunyan” (god).

The performance of mangmang in Mountain Province legends is performed to appease the angry god. These shows how ritualistic and superstitious the Igorots of this province are. Performance of rituals develops unity and cooperation among themselves and recognized the elders to be wiser and that they should be respected.

Summary

This study has been concerned with the survey of eschatological legends of Mountain Province. Specifically, the study sought to answer given problems. Based on the collected narratives from each of the (10) ten municipalities of Mountain Province in (CAR) Cordillera Administrative Region there are at least (100) one hundred narratives that were collected, examined and analyzed in terms of their contents for the content analysis and on their motifs based on Thompson’s Motif Index in Folk Literature.

Although, there are (4) categories of Linda Degh as to what the international committee had identified, this paper ought to choose only the first category which is based on the eschatological stories that explains the origin of the place, origin of things, striking natural phenomena, unusual geographic formations, and the nature of plants and animals.

In the eschatological legend category, there are at least (29) twenty nine for the stories about the origin of the place, (18) eighteen stories of the origin of things, (26) stories about striking phenomena, (10) ten about unusual geographic formation, and (17) seventeen stories about the nature of plants and animals that makes a total of (97) ninety seven selected narratives on eschatological legends from each municipality of Mountain Province in CAR.

The motifs are arranged in the following groups as classified by Uther, Hans-Jörg. In his "Classifying Tales: Remarks to Indexes and Systems of Ordering". He grouped them using the

English alphabet that starts from; A. Mythological motifs, B. Animals, C. Tabu, D. Magic, E. The Death, F. Marvels, G. Ogres, H. Tests, J. The Wise and the Foolish, K. Deceptions, L. Reversal of Fortune, M. Ordaining the Future, N. Chance and Fate, P. Society, Q. Rewards and Punishments, R. Captives and Fugitives, S. Unnatural Cruelty, T. Sex, U. The Nature of Life, V. Religion, W. Traits of Character, X. Humor, and the last is Z. Miscellaneous Groups of Motifs.

These motifs were based from Stith Thompson's motif index of folk literature. Most of the narratives collected from the different municipalities of Mountain Province were mostly mythological that enlightens the origin of a place, creation of the world, supernatural beings falling in love with mortals but ultimately release them because of their values and charisma, and the involvement of the immortals to the mortals.

The cultural connotations found in the literary legends from Mountain Province are the practices of taboo (*inayan*), sharing (*og-ogfu*) as well as the rest day (*tengao*), it also connotes the sanctity of each culture, the practice of preservation of environment, role of men and women in the society, practice of naming places based from history and language confusions and the performance of rituals.

Conclusions

One would be amazed by the number of folklore that really exists within the small population of the municipalities of Mountain Province. Folktales in Mountain Province depict many motifs which are really similar to the other folktales within the minority groups in the Philippines. However, such rich traditions of folktales are no longer being told within the contemporary society today. Only when these [folktales] are to be required in school that these folktales will be compiled as partial fulfillments to finish one's course. The changes of lifestyle in the community, with the introduction of the usage of electronic gadgets, radio and television have caused the traditional folktales disappear from the people's life.

It also concluded that this paper has only discussed a few of the folktales of Mountain Province compiled. It is obvious that there are many more folktales in Mountain Province left unstudied and most of these narratives do provide cultural connotations depicted in every stories from the municipalities of Mountain Province and these includes the practice of sharing which in some parts of the province termed it as "*binnadang*", "*og-ogfo* or *og-ogbo*; the sanctity of culture which is popular in every part of the province which is the "*inayan*", the "*lawa*", the "*ngawi*" or the "*nga-ag*"; and others. A documentation of all the folklore in Mountain province could provide valuable literary resources; these resources could be applied for literary study; cultural study; and literary education. Although the traditional folklore in some parts of Mountain Province are no longer actively read and told as in the past, there are villagers who can still narrate these tales. Every type of folklore from the municipalities of Mountain province has its own literary motif.

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