



The Transcontextualization of Indigenous Vocal Music: A Case of Alangan Mangyans in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

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Abstract

This study seeks to describe the process of transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans within the context of mining exploration. The ethnographic approach of this study investigates the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music of the Alangan Mangyans that has been perpetuated by the introduction of etic or popular music from the lowland. Generally, this study argues that mining exploration of the ancestral domains of Alangan Mangyans has significant contribution to the process of transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music.

Keywords: *Transcontextualization, Indigenous Vocal Music; Facilitating Factors of Transcontextualization, Mitigation of Transcontextualization*

Background of Study

Among the indigenous cultures, a life of ceremonies, rituals, and other special occasions is marked by various forms of musical expression. Each cultural tradition develops a unique repertoire of songs, instrumental music and dances, which accentuate activities within a life-cycle spectrum consisting of the different rite of passage, occupational endeavors, and commemorative events. In spite of the small proportion (about 15%) of the total Philippine population which practices pre-Islamic and pre-Christian oral traditions, the extreme variety of the different forms of artistic expression far outweighs the commodities of mainstream artistic life in the country. Moreover, they serve as a source of cultural identity for the modern Filipino caught in the midst of the hegemonic impact of Western culture (Santos, 1998).

Evidently, the Philippine cultural identities have been indelibly marked by discursive and exploitative influences of Western culture. But, in the phases of analysis of historical events, social scientists taken for granted the strategies of cultural accommodation and rejection among Filipinos in the intercourse of indigenous culture and Western influences. It is therefore an imperative to impress the concept of culture as dialectic of cooptation and denunciation, and the people that mold and embrace culture are active participants and agents of change.

However, in the course of Philippine history, critical and liberative epistemological slant in the analysis of music has undergone a stringent process before it attained its present status. The discourse of Western culture becomes dominant in the domain of culture. In one of his researches Santos (2002) articulated:

Westernization of Asian cultures, whether it materialized in the context of colonization by, or accommodation with, western powers, brought about a variety of significant changes in the musical traditions of the region. Besides its symbolic functioning as an artistic commodity of a technologically superior, cultivated, and modern lifestyle, western music was developed as a global culture medium that facilitated interaction between the West and individual Asian states. It contributed to a hegemonized view of an ideal culture worthy of emulation and to be inspired for by less civilized societies.

Santos (2002) further discussed the hegemonic impact of Western culture on the theory and practice of music in Asia. According to him, the theory and practice of Western music, with a strong orientation on structure and technique (Chou, 1995 in Santos, 2002), created a hegemonized view of all sonic/time related expressions as music. Thus, anything that did not fit its theoretical rubrics were deemed of inferior value – music that lacked harmony or counterpoint, music that had no tempered tuning, music of unknown modalities, anhemitonic music, etcetera. The lure of western music also included the high regard of western society for music as an art form as well as the social pre-eminence accorded to its musicians – composers and performers alike. In Asian societies, musicians either belonged to the lowest social rank, subordinate functionaries in courts and temples, and their musical preoccupation shrouded with anonymity.

The supremacy of western music in the Asian and Philippine cultures never remained uncontested. In fact, it was confronted by contradictory stream of movements and explosions in ethnomusic. In the study of Kasilag (1970), she concluded that:

In the last 20 years, some composers have gone to the extent of eliminating the exclusive traditions of major and minor tonalities in favor of the oriental modes and scale system. The symmetry of measured music of European origin has been abandoned, and in its place, the asymmetrical and irrational rhythmic structures of the exotic music of the East have been replaced by the free linear contours of monophony and heterophony in the manner of Eastern improvisation and ornamentation. These non-European trends have therefore influenced a new outlook

and sense of values that tend to contrast the fossilized attitude of those who strictly cling to Western ideals and traditions, and whose means of critical appraisal are no longer relevant to the new modes of artistic expression.

Moreover, Santos (2002) theorized that Asian music has evolved through the years. He argued that:

Asian music in the last century encapsulates different manifestations of cross-cultural accommodation...The revitalization of tradition in modern institutional structures has also mitigated the marked cultural distinction between classical and cultivate musical systems, and folk and orally transmitted musical practices. While this may appear to reflect social and cultural egalitarianism, the mainstreaming process is still dominated by the power and privilege of the dominant ethnic as well as its own acculturated view of a modern nation-state. Moreover, the superimposition of the larger nationalist agenda over re-empowering ethnic identities has in process blurred the distinctive of aesthetic and moral values of each ethnic tradition, leading at best, to integrative accommodations and compromise inspired by a doctrine of unity and national polity.

The sketch of the evolution of indigenous vocal music is considered significant in this study. This paper focuses its analysis on music as text contextualized on a particular space, time and socio-economic aspects of an ethnolinguistic group, the Alangan Mangyans. Specifically, text refers to the whole spectrum of a particular kind of music such as the production of songs on the basis of certain way of thinking or consciousness. The concept of context encompasses the situations that surround and sustain the existence of text (e.i. space, time and environment). Transcontextualization is a core conceptual tool in the analysis of indigenous vocal music of the Alangan Mangyans. The term transcontextualization was first used by Yamaguti (1994), that refers to changes in the context of a musical text. The transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans covers the process of transformation brought about by mining exploration in their community.

Generally, this study analyzes the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans within mining exploration milieu. Specifically, this paper purports to describe the historical development of music and ethnomusic in the Philippines; know the contents, functions, and meanings of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyan; identify the facilitating factors of transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans; and recommend strategies to mitigate the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans.

The Concept of Transcontextualization as a Theoretical Framework

This study uses the core concept of transcontextualization in the analysis of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans. The said concept was first used as theoretical

framework by Yamaguti (1994), an expert in Musicology in his study entitled “Music in Context and Transcontextualization” that focused on the analysis of the transformation of music in Vietnam. The basic explanation of Yamaguti (1994) on the concept of transcontextualization centered on the fundamental concepts of text and context. According to Yamaguti (1994), text refers to something that is intentionally woven by humans that often used in music to refer only to the words of a song but may also include in a broader sense the whole spectrum of a particular kind of music such as a body of sonic phenomena produced by humans on the basis of certain way of thinking. Yamaguti (1994) further explained that context also originally referred to woven objects. However, when paired dichotomously with text, the term refers to the situation that surrounds and sustains the existence of the text like for example the human body, musical instruments, time and place of performance, occasion and function of music, socio-cultural background of performing arts, and others.

The term transcontextualization was coined by Yamaguti (1994) to cover a wide range of contextual changes of musical text. According to him, these changes may range from simple repetition of a performance of a musical composition in the same place for the same purpose but at a different time, to complicated transformations of performances done at different times at different places and for different purposes. Yamaguti (1994) argued that it is presumed here that music texts change through transmission and diffusion in accordance with the degree of transcontextualization applied to the original.

In a study entitled “The Transcontextualization of Sustainable Development in Mining Exploration Milieu: A Transect on the Alangan Mangyans (Café, 2012) the original concept of Yamaguti (1994) was applied on the experiences of the Alangan Mangyans. This study used the concept of transcontextualization in the analysis of the concept sustainable development. Based on this study, the transcontextualization or transformation of sustainable development among Alangan Mangyans was an offshoot of an introduction of foreign investment on mining exploration in their community. The Alangan Mangyans have holistic concept of sustainable development that is anchored on their ancestral domain and indigenous cosmology, but underwent transcontextualization due to the intrusion of lowland workers and other socio-cultural and technological forces.

The transposition of the concept of transcontextualization in the study of the indigenous vocal music of Alangan Mangyans is intended to capture the transformation that transpired due to external forces or influences brought by mining exploration. In the context of this study, the transcontextualization of indigeneous vocal music has been analyzed in different salient aspects such as content, functions, and meaning system. Generally, transcontextualization refers to the changes that happened to indigenous vocal music of the Alangan Mangyans due to influx of people from other localities who worked in the mining exploration.

Ethnography as a Methodological Approach

This study used ethnography as methodological approach. Intensive fieldworks were conducted to elicit qualitative data on the experiences of Alangan Mangyans. The ethnographic accounts provided exhaustive description of the transformation of the indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans within the context of mining exploration. The process of data gathering was done through different methods that include review of archival resources, observation and in-depth interview.

The review of archival resources was useful in describing the historical background of the development of music in the Philippines. The archival resources reviewed for this study include works of experts in Philippine musicology and ethnomusicology that traced the development of music from pre-hispanic or pre-colonization era up to present. The review of materials was not limited to popular music but included the development of indigenous music within a hegemonic context. The discursive nature of Western culture that intends to acculturate emic cultures serves as the background of the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans in the context of mining exploration.

Observations on the community of Alangan Mangyans were conducted during the early phase of the ethnography. Observations focused on the actual performances of indigenous vocal music of Alangan Mangyans. This method was instrumental in understanding the contents, functions, and meanings of the indigenous vocal music of Alangan Mangyans. Moreover, observation provided a wider perspective and broader context of the data gathered through in-depth interview.

In-depth interviews were conducted with elders and leaders who are considered as rich cultural repository of indigenous vocal music. The key-in formants were selected based on their broad experiences and understanding of the transformation of indigenous vocal music. In-depth interviews centered on the specific characteristics of indigenous vocal music and process of transcontextualization within the context of mining exploration in the ancestral domain of Alangan Mangyans. Also, data on how to mitigate the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans were gathered through in-depth interviews.

Music, Culture and Society: An Interweave

Music is interwoven with cultural identities of different autochthonous groups in the Philippines. The quality and magnitude of evolution of music depend on the richness of culture. The growth of musical appreciation and musical creativity depends on the growth of cultural milieu as a whole (Kalaw, 1970). A well-known American composer once theorized that:

...a civilization that produces no creative artists is either wholly provincial or wholly dead. Although our country, in the realm of music creation, is still considered in its

infancy as compared to other countries in the world, we are made to feel the urge for creativity in any form has been an obsession long felt by Filipinos (Cornejo, 1970).

In the Philippines, types of music that can be heard reify quality of cultural pattern and orientation that have been developed by Filipinos throughout their history. In his study, Santos (1998) observed that:

A countrywide view of Philippine music shows an extensive and diverse plethora of forms, practices, styles, and aesthetics. The musical cultures that exist across the Philippine archipelago represent not only regional and geographical communities such as the Cordillera highland peoples of the Islamized cultures of Mindanao, but also individual language groups such as Kalinga, Manobo, Tagalog and Maranao and even subcultures such as the rich and poor, the old and young in cities, rural communities, and highlands.

However, the onslaught of modernization has tainted the pure character of music. The structure, meaning, and function of music were modified by the discourse of mass production. According to Santos (1998):

The overpowering notion of music as a primary source of entertainment, leisure and commercial gains represents another end in a spectrum whose opposite pole previously considered music as a means of communicating with the spiritual world. Today, a different attitude exists threatening the relevance of music activities that draw their fundamental character from purely aesthetic and artistic concerns.

In line with this notion of music is the idea that music plays significant role in the lives of people in the society. If music is the mirror of life, undoubtedly music had successfully accomplished its avowed role in our fast-changing society. The fast tempo of changes in our society is fully reflected in the fast tempo of changing styles in the world of music (Molina, 1970). According to Kalaw (1970), music is utilized for such therapeutic purposes as piped-in music for office clerks of factory workers. Moreover, Ribaya (1970) highlighted that:

In his age of accelerating change – of social unrest, of student activism, of lunar and space age consciousness, of technological advancement and conflicting ideologies, of morality, of lack of communication, of transient fads and confusion come at break-neck speed must lead somewhere...Man needs direction. It is in directing to change the quality of his life and of civilization that the music educator becomes crucially important.

Also, music can be instrumental in changing different aspects of our lives. According to Kabayao (1970):

We are living in a world of hardened men and women, whose hearts are accustomed to the struggle for existence and who would not hesitate to trample the hearts of

others to gain their ends. This callousness, this insensitivity to the feelings of other people can be changed by fine music. Their sense of values can be transformed. Their latent humanity and their gentleness, natural to a human being, wiser and gentler civilization can be awakened. We can touch the politicians who think only of themselves, the industrialists who pollute our environment, the businessmen who think only the profits, as well as the policemen who indulge only on legal brutalities and the thugs and the gangsters who have lost their original humanity. All these people can undergo transformation by the soothing, elevating, humanizing and divinifying power of music.

In general, the accounts of music presented by different researchers sketch the interplay of music, culture and society. Music is honed by circumstances of the society and exigencies of culture thus making it a reflexive process. The contextualization of music by culture and society is a reciprocal process that means music can also be instrumental in providing the compass of societal and cultural transformation.

Philippine Music in Retrospect: A Sketch of its Evolution

The development of music in the Philippines can be associated to its colonial history. The Spanish occupation that lasted for three hundred years has created tremendous impact on the identity of music in the country. According to Santos (1998):

Christianity introduced a different perspective about art and religion. Its imposition required the expunging of old beliefs and all forms of ancient veneration. Epics are replaced by metrical romances (awit at corrido) which covered a broad spectrum of subjects in western civilization – from biblical tales and lives of saints, to the heroes of Greco-roman epics, and the kings and knights of medieval Europe. Paraliturgical practices such as pabasa, senakulo, and panuluyan were developed to mediate between old forms of worship and a consciousness and acceptance of fundamental elements of the new religion – the bible and catechetical teachings...In the pasyon (life and passion of Jesus Christ), the text is usually chanted on ancient melodies such as the tagulaylay and awit of the tagalog. The long unmeasured musical phrases are sung in high often strained vocal tones. This style has become quite synonymous to the term “pasyon” itself. Other hymns for local church services were composed and performed along similar modes of expression, e.g. the aurora, kristiyanong turog, dalit, gozo, which are sung during the May processions in Bicol.

Later in the history of the Philippines, during the colonization of the Americans the outside influence on development of music was intensified. Santos (1998) narrated that:

In the 20th century the emphasis on mass education enlarged a middle-class population which became the consumers of artistic products that were once the exclusive property of ruling elite. The establishment of schools, conservatories and

academies of music not only formalized the training of professional musicians but also ensured a steady supply of music and musicians to adequately meet the demands of the burgeoning market for music. These training institutions were headed by foreign artists and their faculties consisted of teachers from Europe and the US as well as the finest Filipino musicians. The knowledge of current musical trends in the west was sustained by foreign expatriates.

The absorption of Western influences on Philippine music was felt in various instances. Among the Tausug, the modern baleleng is sung in harmony-oriented tunes and accompanied with chords on the guitar. This love ballad is known to have its older version in the song dance form called dulgang, with musical accompaniment played on bossed gongs (Santos, 1998). Harold Schramm, ethnomusicologist from New York, has synthesized various elements of East/West musical systems in his creative output since 1959, combining Indian elements with Western compositional techniques in his “Kiravani Ramapriya,” premiered by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and played in the United States by the Chicago Chamber Orchestra (Kasilag, 1970).

This trend resulted into a syncretic type of music in the Philippines. According to Kasilag (1970):

In the Philippine scene, Filipino composers continue redressing folk themes and retelling folklore in their major works tailored in Western compositional technique and form. Antonio J. Molina has written works of folk derivation, blending them with impressionistic devices identified with Debussy. Antonio Buenaventura used Igorot themes and gongs in his “Symphony in C,” while Felipe Padilla de Leon has based his larger works on local themes and atmosphere, and folk classical literature, as in “Roca Incantadia,” “Manila Suite,” and “Noli Me Tangere,” Eliseo M. Pajaro in his “Philippine Symphonies,” and the epic “Life of Lam-ang” and his regional sets of “Himig Filipino” has given modern texture to his creative output. And so on down with Rodolfo Cornejo, Lucio San Pedro, Hilarion Rubio, Lucino Sacramento, Alfredo S. Buenaventura, Sister Rosalina Abejo, and others.

However, in spite of the significant impact of Western culture on the Philippine music, there are artists that remain vassals of indigenous music and instruments. In a paper of Kasilag (1970), she stressed out that:

While most of our composers have made use of Philippine folk melodies in larger Western forms, a very selected few have significantly integrated the use of indigenous instruments with the orchestra, using Western know-how. The ethnomusicologist-composer Jose Maceda has departed from the usual path with his unique use of Asian instruments in his compositions reflecting the musique concrete style reminiscent of Edgar Varese’s music for sound’s sake. Maceda has creatively treated Philippine and Asian instruments and human voices emphasizing Asian

Linguistic sounds in avant-garde fashion in his works “Ugma-ugman,” “Kubing,” “Agungan,” and “Pagsamba.

Maceda (ACL, 94 in Santos, 2002) took a pragmatic view in interpreting the current artistic and musical dynamism as inspired by a renewed awareness for the great achievements of Asian peoples and civilizations, and a search for continuity through the rediscovery of distinctions and kinship in Asian philosophy and aesthetics, as indicative of a revitalization of Asian culture and the arts in contemporary times. He particularly cited the development of an intellectualism among Asian music artists and scholars and a renewal of rational inquiry into a vast plethora of musical literature.

The Genre of Philippine Folksongs

There are various types of music in the Philippines. The following reviews are focused the ethnomusicology done particularly in the Cordillera, Palawan and Mindoro, and Mindanao regions. In Mindanao, the manner of reciting the Kur’an and the chanting of religious prayers which are rendered in high intense vocal tones, melismatic linear configurations, and rhythmic framework based on linguistic inflection, have been adapted in the performance style of vocal music even outside the context of religious worship. A song style called sindil by the Maguindanao is characterized by a variety of vocal devices and subtle changes in timbre (Maceda in Santos, 1998).

Among the Tausug, love may be expressed in the luguh style, as in the song called bagat. The luguh style derives its melodic character from the reciting lines of the Kur’an. Melodic patterns consisting of melismatic phrases and syllabic recitation are also used to sing strophic songs called kalangan. Different types of kalangan are rendered while fishing in shallow waters or in deep sea (Martenet and Maceda in Santos, 1998).

A manner of rendition similar to sindil and luguh can be said of the Maranao bayok, a type of musical oration which is performed mostly in formal occasions. The performance of bayok is a must in the enthronement of a datu, during the graduation of students in Kur’an recitation, or in public assemblies with the presence of important personages (Santos in Santos, 1998).

Generic terms of songs also represent individual groups, such as the saliddomay and dangdang-ay which represent several cultures in the Cordillera highlands, the bayok of the Mandaya, awit of the rural Tagalog, limbay of the Manobo, tamiya of the Ibaloi, and kalangan of the Tausug (Santos, 1998).

The Kalinga sing the dango to express formal gratitude, and the og-gayam to greet important guests as well as share words of wisdom to newly married couples. Among the Ibaloi, no occasion of great significance is complete without the singing of the badiw. The vocal form consisting of couplets of reciting lines and choral responses is an all-encompassing musical

expression which can be performed in practically all types of occasions and gatherings – weddings, birthday parties, wakes and fiestas (Santos, 1998).

Another signature form of half-chanted, half-recited poetry is the ambahan of the Hanunoo-Mangyan of Mindoro. Similar to the poetic character of the badiw, the verses contain seven-syllable lines, use symbolic language in expressing ideas and sentiments, and are not accompanied by any musical instrument. The main function of ambahan is one of social contact between persons or groups who interact with each other on a more serious, formal, and subtle level of communication (Postma, 1965 in Santos, 1998).

Among the Palawan, the kulilal is a semi-generic term for love song. Using highly metaphorical and allegorical poetry, the verse-couplets of the kulilal are sung at certain points of long instrumental passages which are played on the kusyapiq (lute), and the pagang (polycordal zither) (McDonald and Maceda, 1984 in Santos 1998).

The Emergence of Mass Culture and its Opposition in the Philippines

When the Spaniards conquered the Philippines, music was formally included in the school curriculum for boys and girls. The origin of popular music in the Philippines can be traced to America's cultural influence. After being colonized by the Spaniards for more than 300 years, the Americans took over and taught the Filipinos their own way of life. One of the facets of American culture is popular music. Its repertoire consists of dance music (boogie-woogie, rock 'n roll, disco, rap, folk ballads, country-western, and American Broadway-type songs. American jazz has also been cultivated mainly catering to the A-B crowd who flock to entertainment places such as bars and cocktail lounges (Roman, 1998).

The proliferation of popular music in the Philippines has urged some authorities to become vocal about their comments on the trend. According to Ribaya, (1970):

We must attempt to bring beauty through the medium of sound, into the main stream of Filipino life. Not only by teaching or by writing, by singing or by playing our instruments, but by letting our voices be heard as one whenever the future of music and the arts are concerned.

Also, Kalaw (1970) opined that:

Mass Media must no longer give in to the public demand, because this public demand is diffused and generalized, escapist, emotional, immature. The public arts have an entertainment and communication functions which must be predicated on sobriety and taste—they can be made into agencies of constructive social criticism and carriers of a higher standard of aesthetics.

The comments of Ribaya and Kalaw are critical. This tends to liberate the Philippine music from the persistent Western hegemony in music. This further implies decolonization of music not only in the Philippines but in other countries as well. Santos (2002) discussed about the concept of decolonization in Asian context. According to him:

Decolonization of Asian musical cultures is very much related to the collapsing of the distinctions, hierarchic structures, and valuations in musical thought. It also presents a concept of modernism, which refers not only to a departure from Western musical mores but also to a redefinition of modernity in Western music that is premised on theoretical, structural and technological determinism, and re-examination of the aesthetic field in the pre-colonial musical practices of the East.

The most important role that we can give to our music is to make it into a true and free expression of the ideals and sentiments of our race. The social upheavals that we are undergoing today – we suspect – all are symptoms of an inner desire to extricate ourselves from pervasive foreign cultural imposition and to eventually reconstruct the national perspective which had faded out in historical process. To be meaningful, our music should take hint and follow the direction pointed by this current social unrest. We would be none the wiser if we continue to play blind to the fact that most of Europe had – at one time in their respective histories – took up the task of developing a national musical idiom and never considered it a trivial function (De Leon, 1970).

It is our firmest conviction that only by shaping anew certain basic concepts and values in our musical education; only by redirecting the energies of our music students towards more positive national goals – only by these can we remain true to the worthy task of bringing about development of a solid national musical art. Though, as a people, we have been creatures of change, and today are burdened by a staggering cultural diversity, the signs point to a new-found hope that this confusion will simmer out in the near future and that young composers, henceforth, will be able to forge an essential unity out of their many legacies (De Leon, 1970).

Current Perspectives on Ethnomusicology

Chou Wen Chung (1994) submits to an observation making a strong reference to the artistic life of 15th and 16th century Europe as having been characterized by the revival of a Greek classical heritage after the fall of the Byzantine empire and the dynamic confluence of ideas that evolved through a sense of freedom as well as the exposure of artists and scholars to culture outside their small territorial enclaves. His reservation lies mainly in the fact that Asian artists and musicians in particular still adhere to European paradigms in music theory and practice, blurring the link between modern sensitivity and pre-colonial Asian aesthetics. He emphasized that Asia-pacific societies must stop thinking colonially of catching up with the West and must instead discern how they can contribute culturally to a new world order (Santos, 2002).

Maceda (ACL, 94 in Santos, 2002) took a pragmatic view in interpreting the current artistic and musical dynamism as inspired by a renewed awareness for the great achievements of Asian peoples and civilizations, and a search for continuity through the rediscovery of distinctions and kinship in Asian philosophy and aesthetics, as indicative of a revitalization of Asian culture and the arts in contemporary times. He particularly cited the development of intellectualism among Asian music artists and scholars as a renewal of rational inquiry of the diversity in musical literature.

Maceda further implied that the confluence of ideas, attitudes, and a cross-cultural fertilization that occurred in the European renaissance between Europe and West Asia may be perceived in the same light as the encounter of two hemispheres in Asian societies today that brought dramatic changes in the expressive life of Asians, or to a lesser degree, the artistic interaction in East Asia during the Tang dynasty (Santos, 2002).

Such confluence was also articulated by Chou Wen Chung in earlier dialogues as a kind of a “prerequisite” towards a new era of Asia-Pacific music, in the context of a modern musical expression whose aesthetic framework and language result from an inevitable crystallization of “mutual or reciprocal actions and influences.”

The Salient Themes of Alangan Mangyan Vocal Music: A Sketch of the Content, Functions, and Meanings

Although a variety of themes are reflected in the indigenous vocal music of Alangan Mangyans, eco-spirituality is central as a message. The cosmology of the Alangan Mangyans is conspicuously illustrated in the contents of their indigenous vocal music. One salient theme is the prayer to their God who possesses the environmental resources in “Prayer to Kapwan Bulod: The Protector of the Forest” (*“Panalangin kay Kapwan Bulod: Ang Diyos ng Kagubatan”*). Another expression of the Alangan Mangyan cosmology is the control of their Gods of the agricultural production in the indigenous vocal music “Song of Prayer for Bountiful Harvest” (*“Awit ng Panalangin para sa Masaganang Pananim”*), “Prayer for a Productive Plantation” (*“Panalangin para sa Magandang Pananim”*), and “Song to Ambuwaw: Prayer for Productive Plantation” (*“Awit kay Ambuwaw: Panalangin para sa Magandang Pananim”*). Also, the indigenous vocal music entitled “Prayer to Alulaba: The Protector of Water” (*“Panalangin Kay Alulaba: Ang Diyos ng Tubig”*), “Prayer for Gentle Wind” (*“Panalangin para sa Mahinang Hangin”*) and “Prayer for Dry Season” (*“Panalangin para sa Tag-araw”*) recognize Gods’ ownership of resources and control of climate.

The content of the indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans is a reflection of their unique eco-spiritual beliefs. The themes of the indigenous vocal music exemplify the anchorage of the religious beliefs and practices of the Alangan Mangyans on the environment. According to Baes (1998) nature is so central to their lives and is considered holy and sacred as they believe it is inhabited by gods and spirits of their ancestors. He explained further that music

is part of a complex of indigenous cultures which is said to be “shaped by” or “rooted” to the land.

Alangan Mangyans believe in “Kapwan Bulod” as protector of mountains and forests, “Alubaba” as protector of rivers, and “Bakwel” as protector of plants and “kaingin” or swidden farms. The spiritual practice of festivity called “Agpamago” during the harvest period is a manifestation of this belief system. These eco-spiritual beliefs hone in them an eco-centric rather than anthropocentric ethos. Succinctly, such cosmology acknowledges the basic notion of Alangan Mangyans that their ancestral lands are sacred and holy, their life and their culture. According to Baes (1998) it is the land where tribal Filipinos interact with their god, deities and spirits provides symbols and raw materials for song, dance, poetry, literature, arts and crafts.

The expression of cosmology in the indigenous vocal music of Alangan Mangyans is not only limited to the environmental and agricultural aspect. The cosmological orientation of the Alangan Mangyans extends to religious healing in indigenous vocal music entitled “Pagmamarayaw: The indigenous vocal music for the sick” (*“Pagmamarayaw: Awit ng Panalangin para sa may Sakit”*) and death in “Pasuway: The Separation of the Body and the Spirit” (*“Pasuway: Ang Paghihiwalay ng Katawan at Ispiritu”*). According to Baes (1998) these encantations are commonly done in private and/or secret rituals by a spirit medium. The calling of spirits is performed mainly for curing the sick, and such is considered to be a battle between good and evil spirits. Marayaw may however be used for other purposes as casting magical spells, predicting coming events, controlling natural occurrences like thunderstorms and driving away invaders.

Other central themes of the Alangan Mangyan indigenous vocal music are courting and parting in “Song for Courting” (*“Awit ng Panliligaw”*) and “Parting Song” (*“Awit ng Paglisan”*). There is also indigenous vocal music for baby setting entitled “Oyayi: Song for Baby” (*“Oyayi: Kanta pare sa Bata”*), for animals in “Monkey” (*“Unggoy”*), and Famine in “Tuparabanggi: A Story of Famine” (*“Tuparabanggi: Kwento ng Pagkagutom”*). This set of indigenous vocal music presents the variety of expressions embedded in the experiences of the Alangan Mangyans. Just like other group of people, they are vocal about their emotions, their care for babies, their interaction with other living primates, and the experience of crisis such as famine. According to the study of Baes (1998) ordinary, everyday songs (Igway for Iraya, Banggi for Alangan and Ambulung for Tadyawan) are considered to be less important than the marayaw. They are commonly used to entertain during gatherings or during planting season, to put a child to sleep (called alunggayi by Iraya and yaiyan by the Alangan and Tadyawan) or in courtship.

The Facilitating Forces of the Transcontextualization of Indigenous Vocal Music among Alangan Mangyans

Many factors may have influenced the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans, however the introduction of mining exploration in their ancestral

domain played a crucial role in the process. Specifically, there are several factors associated to mining exploration that can be attributed to the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans.

First, mining exploration within the community of Alangan Mangyans has resulted to the proliferation of cultural influences from the outside, from lowland workers who are employed in the mining company. The exposure of Alangan Mangyans to etic culture encouraged the development of a more heterogenous culture, and thus favored the transcontextualization of their indigenous vocal music.

Second, the community development initiatives of the mining company such as infrastructure (roads and electrification project), motorcycle transportation vehicles, communication devices, and others have facilitated a more rapid penetration of influences to the culture of Alangan Mangayans from the outside world. These factors have distorted their traditional life system and dislocated them culturally including the transcontextualization of their indigenous vocal music.

Third, the introduction of formal and informal educational programs of the Department of Education was instrumental in exposing the Alangan Mangyans to etic and global knowledge and cultural systems. This exposure encouraged the development a heterogenous cultural pattern such as transcontextualization of indigenus vocal music among Alangan Mangyans.

Lastly, there are evangelical workers who entered the community and preached Christianity among Alangan Mangyans that introduced them to a different spiritual beliefs and cosmology. This favored a more syncretic cultural orientation that included the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music of Alangan Mangyans.

Recommendations for the Mitigation of the Transcontextualization of Indigenous Vocal Music among Alangan Mangyans

The dichotomy between upland-lowland, and/or minority/majority sectors of Philippine society was borne out the colonial experience. Spanish colonization and Christianization from the 16th century had abruptly changed the way of life of the original inhabitants of the country. The simple and relatively isolated peasant communities were transformed in to a semi-feudal society consisting of encomiendas and later haciendas (NCRP-PACT, 1983 in Baes, 1998).

While majority of the population underwent such socio-politico-religious changes, a number of tribes in the more inaccessible areas avoided colonization and continued to cultivate their traditional, pre-hispanic way of life. Consequently, these hill tribes were considered as outcasts by the colonial government, and became the subject of ridicule and discrimination even by the majority of Philippine society (Baes, 1998).

Today, about forty of such tribal Filipinos exist in various regions of the country. With them are the age-old struggles for self-determination, the preservation of their indigenous way of life and the protection of their ancestral land, the issue being addressed not only by themselves but by a number of prominent advocates as well (Baes, 1998). However, the threat of cultural transformation persisted over the years due to various factors.

In the context of Alangan Mangyans, the presence of mining exploration in their ancestral domain is a manifestation of an infiltration of globalization to indigenous community. The ramifications of this phenomenon are evident not only in the cultural aspect, but also economic, social, political, and environmental. In the cultural aspect, the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music as an impact of mining exploration signifies cultural erosion that is salient among Alangan Mangyans. This experience of Alangan Mangyans exemplifies the discursive and hegemonic nature of an etic culture that changes the cultural orientation of indigenous people. Accordingly, this situation entails analysis of the trajectory of cultural pattern among Alangan Mangyans. This direction of analysis will be instrumental in fostering cultural preservation of indigenous vocal music and identities of Alangan Mangyans. Specifically, the following strategies can reverse the process of transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans and therefore preserve its cultural integrity.

First, there should be institutional initiatives aimed at attaining conscientization among Alangan Mangyans on the negative impacts of mining exploration project. The mining exploration in the ancestral domains of Alangan Mangyans has repercussions on the cultural heritage, including indigenous vocal music that are associated to their activities based on natural environment.

Second, the Department of Education as an educational institution should integrate in its curricula both in formal and non-formal education the cultural aspects of the indigenous people. The inclusion of indigenous vocal music in the lessons of pupils and students will strengthen their appreciation of their cultural heritage in general.

Third, the local government of the province of Mindoro Oriental should be active in promoting the cultural heritage of Alangan Mangyans through different cultural activities in the community. Cultural performances in different public occasions foster cultural transmission, and therefore diffuse cultural heritage throughout the community especially to the younger generation.

Lastly, the Alangan Mangyans should not be uprooted from their community by relocating them to a lowland settlement. Relocation of the Alangan Mangyans will result to displacement and cultural disorientation since their cultural identity is anchored on the ancestral domain where they live. The indigenous vocal music of Alangan Mangyans is associated to their day-to-day activities, thus relocating them will result to disruption of life system and cultural activities.

Conclusions

The study describes the process of transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans. The transformation of indigenous vocal music is evident on the contents, functions, and meanings that have been influenced by popular music from the lowland. Even though an array of forces has contributed to the transcontextualization of indigenous vocal music among Alangan Mangyans, undeniably mining exploration has been a primary factor. The introduction of mining exploration in the ancestral domains of Alangan Mangyans exposes their culture together with other aspects (e.i. social, political, economic, and environmental) to the influences of etic perspective. This phenomenon orchestrated the interplay between indigenous culture of Alangan Mangyans and external culture that perpetuated its transcontextualization.

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