

MAMANWA TALES WITH CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC NOTES

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Abstract

This study which is narratology in form aimed to survey the oral literatures of the Mamanwa Tribe in Lubcon, Cortes, Surigao Del Sur. In particular, the study sought to discover the prose, mythical tales and folktales of the said ethnic group. I also endeavored to analyze the oral narratives through archetypal lens. The said worldview was utilized to identify the prevalent themes and symbols, including issues and values embedded in the oral literatures of the Mamanwas and see how these were connected to the culture of the tribe. This study employed the qualitative research design incorporating non-participant observation, interview, focused group discussion and code and re-code. Findings reveal that cultural values and universal issues are embedded in the literature gathered. In terms of form, the oral literature of Mamanwa is rich in metaphorical language.

Keywords: interface, literature, culture, Mamanwa experience

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1.0 Introduction

Every society in its own unique way responds to the challenges of the human spirit through oral literature in its various forms. This literature arises from universal creative impulses as refracted through a particular culture. By it, the meaning of life is organized, the use of the environment and how to live in it is explained, the causes of human suffering are justified and its mitigation suggested, the spirit world is populated and its relationship to humans detailed, the reasons for social injustice are argued, warfare and its reasons are glorified, how the nature of love, beauty and companionship is experienced, as well as how one is to be in the world. Oral literature has great aesthetic value, resonating with all of us, as it deals with the universal challenges of the human spirit (Appell, 2010). This study is designed to cultivate the value of appreciation by putting into the forefront local knowledge of the Mamanwas on their prose taking into account their mythical tales and folktales.

The oral literature before and during the early years of the Spanish regime consisted of epics, myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, and riddles. With the arrival of the Spaniards, religious literature developed too. This consisted of books, of prayers, doctrines, novenas, biographies, of saints and other religious subjects (Hisona, 2012). In terms of ownership, oral scripts/ oral items are communally owned. In this regard, oral songs and other materials are owned by every member of community since their authors could not be traced (Omosule, 2011). Appell and Appell (2013) advanced the idea that every society responds to the challenges of the human spirit through oral literature in its various forms. According to them, this literature ascends from universal creative impulses of a particular culture. By it, the meaning of life is amplified. The uses of the environment and how to live in it is explained. The causes of human suffering are justified and its mitigation suggested; the spirit world is populated and its relationship to humans detailed, the

reasons for social injustices are argued; warfare and its reasons are glorified, how the nature of love, beauty and companionship is experienced, and how one is to be in the world.

Appell and Appell (2013) in their World Oral Literature Project cited the Rungus who are Dusunic speaking people of the Kudat District of Sabah, Malaysia. In this endeavor, they made mentioned that acculturation has threatened the original religion of this people they are now strongly attached to Christianity. For this tribe, one of the major genres of oral literature was the religious performance for illness, for success in agricultural activities, and for the productiveness of the village and families. In the past, these were performed by the priestess who was also a spirit medium. However, to date, these ceremonies are now seldom being practiced. While oral literature serves as the soul of history, today, many indigenous people in the Philippines who have gone through the formal educational system can hardly trace their ethnic identity. Even at the tertiary-level, indigenous students know little about their culture and history. No tertiary level curriculum in the Philippines offers a general course on indigenous culture and history. Some teachers try to integrate local knowledge in the curriculum but many of them are handicapped by the lack of knowledge and teaching strategies (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2001). In the light of my visit to the Mamanwa community, I have witnessed a cultural pattern being modified. As UNESCO (2001) remarked, "Gone are the times when culture can be seen and lived in its pristine and original form." The said claim has become evident when I personally interviewed some of the aged members and adults of the tribe who testified that they have already embraced the dominant language of the lowlanders for fear of being ostracized.

To save these oral literatures from being lost forever, I am inclined to collect these tales and package them

through a compendium for posterity reasons. As a contribution in the field of education, I intend to use the oral literatures as an instructional tool that may promote appreciation for the rich cultural heritage of the ethnic group found in the Province of Surigao del Sur. This may also become a form of support to Republic Act 10533 that supports the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Indigenous Peoples Right Act of 1997 which both posit that each indigenous tribe has the right to propagate, utilize and handover to the next generation their history, language, oral tradition, philosophy and other traditional knowledge.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This study is seen through the Archetypal theory of Northrope Frye (1991) as cited by Jahangiri (2012) and Carl Jung cited in the work of Guerin et al. (1992). For them, the narrative and imagery patterns can be traced to myths and to those human rituals, in the form of harvest, songs, sacrifices, folk customs, etc., handed down from time immemorial. These rituals are themselves responses to or attempts to render intelligible natural cycles such as the solar cycle of the day, the seasonal cycle of the year and the organic cycle of human life. Such rituals represent an effort on the part of humans to humanize natural phenomena. In other words, Archetypal theory tries to make sense out of the events in the physical over which humans in fact have little control and which are inherently unintelligible. As such, rituals are deliberate expressions of the will to synchronize human and natural energies. The term archetype can be applied to an image, a theme, a symbol, an idea, a character type, and a plot pattern. Archetypes can be expressed in myths, dreams, religions, fantasies and folklore.

Archetypes interpenetrate and interfuse with one another. There are presumed numerous archetypes in the collective unconscious. Some of the ones identified include birth, rebirth, death, power, magic, unity, the hero, the child, God, the demon, the old wise man, the earth mother, and the animal. Archetypal criticism is concerned with the way cycles and reiterating patterns of tradition, culture, inborn images, and beliefs affect literary works. It operates with the idea that certain symbols represent the same ideas no matter the time or place. Authors focus on symbols to utilize in literary works in order to strike readers' unconscious. Such symbols recur often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole. It also deals with symbolism of nature and the cosmos.

In this study, the knowledge which was afforded to me by the participants provided me not only with their tales but also gave me an insight of who they are as a community. From the hindsight, I was made to understand that symbols and patterns prevalent in their stories also

reflect their beliefs, traditions and heritage. Using the Archetypal lens, I was able to deduce significant notions including issues and values reflected in the rich linguistic art of the Mamanwa.

3.0 Research Methodology

In this study, I employed narratology. Significantly, the words "narrative" and "story" can both be traced back to an original meaning of to know. It is through the story that people quite literally come to know – that is to construct and maintain their knowledge of the world (Bruner, 2002). Through a story, an individual creates meaning out of the daily happenings, and this story, in turn, serves as the basis for anticipation of future events. According to Callaway and Lester (2002), our personalities grow out of the stories we have chosen to construct from our perceptions of what has happened to us and how these stories influence our future expectations.

This study adopts the embedded, action and temporary suspension types of evaluation. In this study, I presented not just the oral literatures of the Mamanwas of Surigao del Sur, but also, I incorporated these types of evaluation by analyzing the themes and symbols entrenched in the stories, as well as the figures of speech rooted in the oratures that I have gathered. In this undertaking, I had the task of gathering the oral literatures of the Mamanwa tribe and interpreting it in a way that will make people decipher the rich indigenous tales that mirror the Mamanwa community, to include their fears, hopes and aspirations. In a way, this design allowed me to understand better the behaviors that shaped the Mamanwa community as a whole.

The research participants were composed of the Mamanwa Datu, Mamanwa Babaylan and the other elders of the tribe who are considered knowledgeable on the oral literature of the tribe. Other informants were chosen according to their special knowledge concerning the oral arts being collected. The remaining informants were laymen capable of providing a knowledgeable evaluation of the oral art being investigated from a different, yet important perspective. In this study, most of my data came from the Datu and the Baylan who possessed considerable knowledge about my study. Young Mamanwas and even other adults are devoid of this kind of knowledge because of the encroachment of the lowlanders' customs and dialect. The profile of the key informants is also presented.

Another important procedure I employed was the non-participant observation where I simply recorded what happens as things or events naturally occur. While they were doing their habitual activity, I was able to have the opportunity of simply jotting down their activities as they transpired which gave me deeper understanding of what they are as a community.

Fieldwork was also employed. I conducted field

work to document or portray the everyday experience of individuals by observing and interviewing them. During my first visit, I did not immediately proceed with the interview; rather, I established rapport with the leaders of the community, and I informed them the purpose of my presence in their community. I also explained to them the nature of my study and how they can help me in the realization of this study.

In the interview that I conducted, I utilized an interview guide to ensure that the general information is collected from the interviewees. This interview provided more focus than the conversational approach, but still allowed a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting the information from the interviewees. I engaged this tool for me to be able to realize the objectives of this study, and that is to collect, document and analyze the oral literatures of the Mamanwa tribe.

After the recordings, observations and the interviews were completed, the next stage was the laborious task of transcribing, translating and analyzing the materials and data collected. I transcribed the audio recording of the tales narrated in the Mamanwa language. After which, I brought it back to the Datu who was also fluent in the lowlanders' language. He translated them to Tandaganon, (a local language in the Province) before I had it translated into Filipino and English language. Once the oral literatures were put into writing, I analyzed it through the Archetypal and Formalism worldview. From these literary approaches, I identified the prevalent archetypal themes and symbols in the Mamanwa oral literatures as well as the figurative language present in their linguistic art. The results were presented back to the tribe. The purpose was for me to be able to get feedbacks from the informants to help me refine the explanations I presented in this study.

In this study, to obtain credibility, I employed engagements, triangulation and member checking. Credibility is defined by Holloway and Wheeler (2002), Macnee and McCabe (2008) as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Through the method of several engagements, triangulation and member checking, I was able to ensure that the data gathered are truthful and straightforward. In this study, I had a first counter with the tribe not to immediately conduct the study but to build rapport and gain the tribe's trust. The initial visit was solely for me to explain the intent of my visits and how they can help me achieve such goal. I did a courtesy call to the Datu and sought his permission for the conduct of the research. Then, this was followed by several more three more visits for the collection, and interpretation of the data that I was able to gather.

I was able to accomplish triangulation by asking the same research questions of different study participants.

Aside from the Datu, I also had the opportunity to interview the Baylan (shaman), Kamalas-an (wise elder) and a few more members of the tribe who have the knowledge of their local literatures. In this manner, I was able to check out information across the informants and had a rich collection of their literatures through the contribution of the range of people I was able to interview. For member check, after I translated their oral literature to English, I returned to the site and I asked the participants to review both the data collected and my interpretation of that gathered data. Participants verified their statements and filled in the gaps. Changes were made and incorporated to the refined work.

In taking into account the ethical considerations, I followed certain protocols to protect the rights and confidentiality of the participants. Letter of consent was made and a dialogue was done informing them the purpose and process of the study. The conduct of the study was also done at the convenience of the participants. Furthermore, I was able to achieve salient considerations by approaching the NCIP office and the community leaders to explain my intention and what I intend to achieve not just for my benefit but for the benefit of the entire tribal community. I assured them that my presence in the community was only for the sole intention of gathering relevant details on their oral literatures and when in doubt sharing sacred beliefs, I did not probe to let them feel it was not within my aim to exploit them. In this manner, I was able to show respect for persons and community which requires a commitment to ensuring the autonomy of research participants, and, where autonomy may be diminished, to protect people from exploitation of their vulnerability. The dignity of all research participants must be respected. Before pictures were taken and recordings were done, I asked whether it is plausible for me to do those things. To these, they consented orally since most of them have difficulty in giving me a written approval. A number of these people have not gone to school and do not know how to write their names. Asking permission is very salient to the tribe people. Adherence to this principle ensures that they will not be used simply as a means to achieve my research objectives but as active participants of the project who see the essentiality of completing the task.

To avoid social and psychosocial risks and to maintain beneficence, I made sure that nothing was altered in the literature they shared to me. I went out my way to see to it that the research participants were able to comment, suggest and polish the data as I referred back to them the output of my work.

Justice requires a commitment to ensuring a fair distribution of the risks and benefits resulting from research. To attain justice, I am obliged to give the community an output of the study and to furnish the

office of the NCIP the same document. By doing so, I am, in my own little way, contributing to the perpetuation and preservation of the Mamanwa tribe.

4.0. Results and Discussion

The oral traditions and expressions domain encompasses an enormous variety of spoken forms including proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, songs, poems, charms, chants and more. Oral traditions are used to pass down knowledge, cultural and social values, as well as collective memory. UNESCO (2001) posits that these oral traditions are vital in keeping a certain culture alive. Based from the interviews I conducted, I found out that the Mamanwas oral literatures comprise mainly on prose and poetry. In terms of its prose, evident are folktales and myths. As to poetry, they have high fascination for songs they call Tud-om.

Like classical literatures, every statement of the Mamanwa oral literatures represents a collection of moral ideas and principles based on experience and universal application. The narrators (tribesmen) do not usually evaluate the aesthetics but are rather interested in using them on the basis of their levels of social value. For the Mamanwa community, the songs, they call Tud-om are used in different occasions. Some are used during planting, harvesting, while others are used during their feast that they call "Kahimonoan". Dorson (2001) remarked that wise expressions of the society reflect philosophical views which are the results of the well-founded observations on human behavior and the changing experienced situations. In agreement, Obiechina (2002) remarked that in African oral tradition, an idea is given validity that bears the stamp of communal approval and is being linked to the storehouse of communal wisdom. He added that these oral traditions have distinctive qualities of its own, penetrating and transforming its structures, extending its scopes and making it a dynamic vehicle for exploring historical, social, cultural, political, personal and psychological themes, for articulating human problems and dilemmas and for raising and integrating consciousness.

The notion is congruent to the assertions of Finnegan (2012) further important characteristic of oral literature: the significance of the actual occasion, which can directly affect the detailed content and form of the piece being performed. Oral pieces are not composed in the study and later transmitted through the impersonal and detached medium of print, but tend to be directly involved in the occasions of their actual utterance. Some of the poetry of African Literature according to Finnegan is designed for and arises from particular situations like funerals, weddings, celebrations of victory, soothing a baby, accompanying work, and so on; again, with certain prose forms (like, for instance, proverbs), appropriateness to the occasion may be more highly valued by local critics than the verbal

content itself. But even when there is not this specific connection, a piece of oral literature tends to be affected by such factors as the general purpose and atmosphere of the gathering at which it is rendered, recent episodes in the minds of performer and audience, or even the time of year and propinquity of the harvest. Many oral recitations arise in response to various social obligations which, in turn, are exploited by poet and narrator for his own purposes. The performer of oral pieces could thus be said to be more involved in actual social situations than the writer in more familiar literate traditions.

Finnegan (2012) further noted that most prevalent of all, perhaps, and most fundamental for the study of African oral literature is the hidden feeling that this is not really literature at all: that these oral forms may, perhaps, fulfill certain practical or ritual functions in that supposedly odd context called 'tribal life', but that they have no aesthetic claims, for either local people or the visiting scholar, to be considered as analogous to proper written literature, let alone on a par with it. The idea continues to hold ground that it is radically different from real (i.e. written) literature and should even have its own distinctive name such as folklore to make this clear. The fact, however, that oral literature can also be considered on its own terms, and, as pointed out in the last chapter, may have its artistic characteristics, analogous to but not always identical with more familiar literary forms, is neglected in both popular conceptions and detailed studies.

In addition, Appell also supported the thoughts on the use of oral literatures in his study of the Rungus speaking community in Sabah, Malaysia. He postulated that every society in its own unique way responds to the challenges of the human spirit through oral literature in its various forms. This literature arises from universal creative impulses as refracted through a particular culture. By it, the meaning of life is organized, the uses of the environment and how to live in it is explained, the causes of human suffering are justified and its mitigation suggested, the spirit world is populated and its relationship to humans detailed, the reasons for social injustice are argued, warfare and its reasons are glorified, how the nature of love, beauty and companionship is experienced, as well as how one is to be in the world.

The traditional oral literature of the Rungus and related Dusunic speakers, according to Appell has developed over long periods of time to interpret and explain the human condition as viewed through their cultural window, to symbolize their experience with the environment, and make sense of their place in history. Such literature gives us insight into the human condition during those times in human history when small communities existed on subsistence agriculture and came into conflict with other such societies. Among the Rungus there exists a vast inventory of poetry, prayers, songs, hymns and word

pictures of the life that they have led and their relation with the absolute and their relations with each other.

This accumulation of oral literature, winnowed through the ages, is exquisite in its beauty and depth of wisdom. It provides a unique portrait of life as lived in a different time and place by individuals who share the human spirit with us. It encodes the basic cultural themes, values and propositions of this society, and it contains the creative voice of the people. This volatile library of profound aesthetic value will shortly disappear resulting in a great loss to the world of literature and knowledge of cultural data and art forms. There was, and still is, considerable urgency in collecting as much of the traditional oral literature as possible to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Rungus way of life and to prevent this well-developed linguistic art from being lost forever.

Similarly, this account on the use of the oral literature is also true with the Mamanwa community. Their songs (Tudom) for example, are not so much appreciated for its aesthetic beauty, like its embedded figurative language but rather on its social function. Stories also are told not for the purpose of analyzing the themes and symbols embedded in the story but rather on the significance of these stories in terms for example of its moral values. It instills communal values rather than on the elements of the story itself.

Archetypal Themes and Symbols

In the study of Mutia (2003) on Bakweri Dirges, she revealed that an impressive array of descriptive passages is used. In this way, persons and objects are described in vivid language colored by the narrator's emotions. There is the use of different symbols and figures of speech to convey different moods that arouse various emotions from the listeners. It is in this manner that the raconteurs portray their innate creative abilities to enhance their art, thereby giving their particular genre much of its beauty.

In the Mamanwa's oral traditions, one can perceive the following themes and symbols. Culture as a form of social control is evident. In the tribe's culture, parents are accorded the authority to decide on their child's lifetime partner. According to Degh (2000), parents are authorized to set an arranged marriage for their child. She stated that parents as they are, they are concerned with the welfare of their child especially in securing their future. Before any potential candidates are considered, families as a unit decide the values and characteristics that potential spouses should have so that their child and their chosen partner will have a satisfying life together.

Bodunde (2001) quipped that this kind of marriage is called pragmatic marriage. Pragmatic Marriage is a marriage that is made possible by formal procedures of family or group politics.

A responsible authority sets up or encourages the

marriage. The authority could be parents, family, a religious figure or a consensus. The former two often start the process with informal pressure, social pressure, whilst the latter two often start the process with a formal system or statement. In both cases, the authority has a compelling veto over the marriage, and this system is socially supported by the rest of community so that to deny it is extreme and drastic. Arranged marriages are a form of pragmatic marriage. Once declared, an engagement is implicit, which follows through with a formal marriage ceremony. Those who uphold pragmatic marriage frequently state that it is traditional, that it upholds social morals, that it is good for the families involved.

Another salient theme is on servitude. Mamanwas practice servitude in real sense because accordingly, this merits for sincerity and pure intentions. Bodunde (2001) postulated that in African law, there are two kinds of rights relevant to bondage, namely rights of ownership and rights of guardianship. Both these concern the group's estate and may thus be compared with patrimonial rights. Traditionally, rights of guardianship or authority were rights over persons. The object of such a right was an individual's freedom. Thus, guardianship entitled the group to an individual's earnings and services. The purpose of this is establishing and maintaining a family.

Sacrificial scapegoat is also apparent. In the story of Mawari, she offered herself to redeem her ill-fated parents. She exemplified the scapegoat archetype that is killed the cleansing and atonement of the corruption of her parents. Jahangiri (2012) noted that the rites of blood sacrifice and purification is necessary for human survival which is depicted in the case of Mawari's parents. For them to live on, Mawari has to die. And if Mawari is to survive, her parents must die. Death is inescapable if one is chosen as a sacrificial scapegoat. This is also supported by Jahangiri when she said in her work that in certain situations, people put their problematic burden on a person or an animal to relieve their tension. This type of displacement can be coined as sacrificial archetype that can be considered as a subcategory of the general category of archetypes residing in the collective unconscious. Frazer as cited by Jahangiri (2012) noted that regardless of the subtle variations among the sacrificial scapegoat rituals, they occur in the situations that have some similarities in common. These similarities can be summed up as spreading calamity, inability of the community member to control it, attributing it to God's wrath created as a result of their sinful actions. They look for representative in the group with some distinctive features from the rest, casting the blame of their sin or guilt on their chosen victim as their scapegoat and dismissing it from the community in hope for regeneration, rebirth and welfare.

Dream as a medium of prophecy is also present in the Mamanwa tales. Jung (n.d.) has noted that our dreams are layered with meaning. Both personal and

transcendent, dreams tell us about ourselves and take us on a journey through space and time. As he discovered, they also contain archetypal images that connect us to the collective unconscious. When archetypes appear in our dreams, Jung thought, they come forth from this great collective well of knowledge, understanding, and meaning. When we encounter archetypal symbols in our dreams, we may be certain that higher forces are at work in our lives. These archetypal dreams that Jung considered so significant have been recognized and valued since antiquity. They often rely on historical or mythological analogy, and by definition they occur in all cultures, belonging to the great Collective Unconscious — a source of meaning for all human beings of all times and places. Archetypal symbols are greater than life. Their power transcends understanding and belief. From the story, the angel uses to enter into the dreams of Baylan Berto to give his prophesied fate of him. Hence, it in the tale, dreams do serve as a medium of prophecy. Mamanwas also believe that "Tahaw" sends message to the Baylan in the form of a dream. The Baylan is also believed to see coming catastrophes and tragic fate through his/her dreams. This will serve as caveat to the community to prepare a ritual to prevent such ill-fate to happen.

On the other hand, a prevailing theme in most of the tales centers on appeasement of a wronged deity. Like most of aboriginal stories, Mamanwas believe that we are not the sole custodians of the earth. They believe that there are unseen dwellers who are also sentinels of the macrocosm. As posited by Appell and Appell (2013), the Rungus of Sabah Malaysia also believes in offerings. For illness, for example, the priestess (spirit medium) will consult the unseen creatures to find out what was the wrong done and how can they be appeased. Illness is thus perceived as the loss of one's soul taken by the spirits who punish or torture the soul to retaliate for the wrong committed against them.

The Mamanwas place the rest of the offerings in a circle plate. Frye (1991) posits that a circle symbolizes wholeness and unity. It also symbolizes cycle of life, continuous and never ending. With this, it just implies that using this kind of plate would surely express how sincere they were in asking forgiveness for the transgressions that they have done which anger those supernatural creatures living in that certain place.

Evident also is the archetypal symbol seven that symbolizes completion; entirety, and it is the perfect and potent number – signifying the union of three and four, the complement of the cycle, the perfect order (Guerin et al., 1992). It is the combination of four and three. Three which symbolizes light; spiritual awareness and unity, the male principle; and four which is associated with the circle, life cycle, four seasons; female principle, earth, nature; four elements (earth, air, fire, water).

For Mamanwas, they believe that number seven

is the number of God for it is during this day that God rested after He formed and fill the earth with all kinds of creations; hence, in order to complete the set of their offerings, they need to prepare seven of each chosen items that include biscuits, candies, cigarettes, eggs, red wine, buyo, apog and mam-on.

Other salient themes in the Mamanwa's oral literatures include the cosmic war between good and evil disobedience leads to ill-fate, death and fear, the value of religion, unity and love. Symbols include the Universal God, green, tree, spirits, paradise, devil, and purgatory. The tales and songs are also filled with figurative language. Appell and Appell (2013) mentioned in their work *Oral Literature of the Rungus and Related Ethnic Group* that every society responds to the challenges of the human society through oral traditions and in various forms. They further noted that these literatures arise from universal creative impulses as refracted through a particular culture. Through this linguistic art, the meaning of life is organized and explained. The causes of human suffering are justified and its mitigation suggested. The spirit world is populated and their relationship to humans detailed. Indeed, the Mamanwas have developed their oral literature to interpret and explain the human condition as how they perceived them through a cultural lens that significantly symbolizes their experience with the environment and their place in the society. The oral literatures bear aesthetic value resonating among us all, for these literatures deal with universal challenges of the human spirit.

Metaphorical Language found in the Oral Literatures of the Mamanwas

The Mamanwa literature is found to be rich not only with themes and symbols but also with figurative language. Prevalent figures found in the oral literatures of the Mamanwas include hyperbole, metaphor, allusion, apostrophe, allegory and personification. Manifested also in their Tud-om are figures of repetition which include anaphora and epistrophe. It denotes that this local dialect has richness of vocabulary.

Vocabulary, however, is not just a matter of the number of words. Finnegan (2012) postulated that it also concerns the way in which they are used. In this respect, the picturesque and imaginative forms of expression of the Mamanwa language are particularly noticeable. These are often applied to even the commonest actions, objects, and descriptions. In the study of Finnegan, the highly figurative quality of Bantu speech comes out in some of these terms—molalatladi, the rainbow, is literally 'the sleeping-place of the lightning'; mojalafa, the son and heir of a household, is 'the eater of the inheritance'; bohlabatsatsi, the east, is 'where the sun pierces'. This also comes out in compound nouns. In Kongo, for instance, they have kikolwa-malavu, a drunken person (lit. 'being

stiff with wine'), or kilangula-nsangu, a slanderer (lit. 'uprooting reputations'), and in Bemba icikata-nsoka, a courageous person (lit. 'handling a snake'), and umuleka-ciwa, ricochet (lit. 'the devil aims it').

Figurative expression is also commonly used to convey abstract ideas in a vivid and imaginative way. The idea of 'conservatism', for instance, is expressed in Zulu by a phrase meaning literally 'to eat with an old-fashioned spoon', 'dissimulation' by 'he spoke with two mouths', while in Southern Sotho idiom, the idea of 'bribery' is conveyed by 'the hand in the cloak' (Fong & Chuang, 2004). The flexible way in which this vocabulary can be deployed can only be explained with some reference to the characteristics of Bantu morphology. One of the most striking features of its structure is the wealth of derivative forms which it is possible to build up on a few roots through the use of affixes, agglutination, and at times internal vowel changes. By means of these derivatives it is feasible to express the finest distinctions and most delicate shades of meaning (Finnegan, 2012).

Folklore texts are endowed with what is known as expressive features; and these features which are already spoken in a society need to be carefully explored. The identification of a particular metaphoric expression of oral narrative as part of a generic category and the way it conveys ideas in culturally accepted terms, require a skillful explanation. One of the most obvious and recognized methods of formulating folk genres includes the exploration of rhythmic languages as for instance in Oromo *mammaaka* (proverb), *weedduu sabaa* (folk song) and the *walaloo* (poem); and the utilization of constituent categories (words and phrases) in parallel structures (Gikandi, 2003).

A literary work, especially the oral narrative tradition involves devices that expand and develop meanings such as metaphors to illuminate or demonstrate the way literary genres or expressions can help achieve richness and subtlety of explanation. This is supported by Herman & Vervaeck (2005) when they posited that the charming aspect of the literary work is often associated with the faculty of producing ideal creations consistent with the existing reality. The portrayal of that reality requires the ability to have new and exciting ideas or what we call imagination. Therefore, the poetic imagination as part of metaphoric facts involves the innovative power of the human mind and the formation of artistic vocabulary.

In congruence, Kidane (2002) asserted that a good metaphor is not merely a clever embellishment of the poet's vision but rather the precise embodiment of that vision. Metaphor according to him is not a denotative sense of language. The ornamental metaphor produces a decorative meaning and is the center of poetic function by which man as a rational being imaginatively comprehends the relation of characters to events, time and space. In the literary world, the image on the surface is nothing more

than a suggestive or overt sense of the oral text. The artistic aspect of it must be discovered by the researcher and this makes the linguistic art more effective.

The poetic character of the oral text and the performance features which distinguish folk literary tradition from casual language comprise what is known as stylistic qualities of folklore expressions. On the one hand, the figurative vocabularies of oral art represent measures of derivation from the literal sense of communication, but at the same time they reflect attempts made to address the cultural convention and ideal norms of performance for each genre on the other. Like the oral literatures of Mamanwas which are not just plainly depicted but also carry aesthetic beauty that makes them distinctively creative.

Issues and values

Oral literature has always been expressed in a particular social context. Communities meet together, they share, discuss and make of this a powerful tool of socialization. That they may have a positive moral impact, the oratures are used not just for fun but to create an awareness of the value systems by which the life of the community should be guided.

According to Todorov (2007), literature does not emerge from a vacuum but is directly related to a certain anthropological experience that enables a society to express itself through a value system, based on moral principles. In other words, Todorov is of the view that literature should never deviate from its principal responsibility of enabling individuals to make a profound experience of self and become a responsible actor in society. What gives meaning to literature, if not its ability to understand the world in which we live. He seems to echo the sentiments of French writer and philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre, who admits: "Very slowly, I discover the real." The reality of which he speaks refers to our sentiments, the love and the hatred that are deeply rooted in us; everything points to the real "me". Judging from this perspective, we can affirm that literature transcends mere fiction to shed light on our human experience.

Oral literature is defined by African Writers, Nandwa and Bukenya (1983) cited in the work of Etyang (2011) as those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree the artistic characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression. It is a type of unwritten literature that reveals a fictional truth which resembles a spoken novel. This unwritten form of literature presented as folktales, proverbs, legends, myths, riddles is one of the most ancient aspects of culture. Woven within a specific socio-economic, political and anthropological context, it was initially used as a form of social interaction and entertainment. Due to its unique structure of addressing the daily issues in this evolving

society, oral literature provided a system of laws through which a code of conduct was established. They played such an important role in the moral formation of the society that today. Many of the present social ills within our society are attributed to the absence of the values taught through those means.

On a societal level, the actions of individuals are judged according to a legal code, which often defines their destiny. Members of a society are expected to live according to those norms, customs and laws established by society. When we speak of society, we perceive a group of people living within a certain geographical location thus interacting with each other on a daily basis. They develop certain customs which they adopt and which initiate them into a particular lifestyle. This initiation is not aimed at mere participation in the life of this people. It is a sign of affiliation to the group and an acceptance of all the values upheld by its members. This explains the interest of any form of initiation in all aspects of human life and human living, whether sociological, anthropological, political, psychological or religious.

The relationship between literature and civilizations show that oral literature lies within the framework of specific traditions. Its mythical appearance gives it a fantastic dimension that reveals its authenticity. It concerns words and expressions that emerge from the depth of our memory, this sacred space through which our liberty is expressed, has been used as therapy in the midst of difficulties, to understand the deeper sense of our existence. It is an instrument through which a society transmits its sense of originality and its vision of the world to its members.

The Mamanwa oratures which compose of prose and poetry mirror various societal issues that encompass social, political, religious and environmental concerns. These literary pieces are also infused with values that help us discern and distinguish good from evil; what is an acceptable norm from what is unacceptable; what is life giving from what becomes an obstacle to social or moral development.

5.0 Conclusion

When we study oral literatures in a broader literary form, we reframe them to make our judgment and show their artistic functions in a particular light. By using certain reliable yardsticks, we can explore oral literatures in order to construct the narrators' worldviews in different ways and develop our own sense of poetic beauty and identity. One of the central points I have given prominence is that oral tradition is also a kind of history; and it is, therefore, not surprising to find it in the form of a historical structure which conforms to the Mamanwa tales. Furthermore, literary tradition, like human history, is anecdotal in that it contains a particular amusing event which helps scholars construct new ideas and values. If our task is to enquire

into the artistic sense and aesthetic world of the Mamanwa oral literatures, we must first and foremost convince ourselves that an oral text as an academic subject has its own poetic meaning and peculiar characteristics.

As many others, my effort is to prevent the loss of the valuable literary tradition to be lost forever. The aim of exploring oral literature in a contemporary setting is to transform it from abstract narrative to expressive form (intellectual discourse); and in this respect, it seems hard to make a distinction between the intriguing nature of oral art and modern art. In thematic and aesthetic terms, verbal art shares common ground with modern fictions simply because both are meant for teaching and entertaining through the medium of artistic language and images; which when combined, can create a social mirror and desirable effects. Through the historic moment, the language and character revelation may take a different form. We find in both, common characteristics: fitting descriptions, the portrayal of certain images relevant to social situations, within which the characters operate, and other creative techniques and devices

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