

Re-Examining the Ibalong: An Indigenous Bikolano Epic or a Spanish Poem?

Maria Aurora Gratela Caballero

College of Education, Partido State University, Goa, Philippines
Email: caballero.mariaaurora07@gmail.com, caballero.aurora@parsu.edu.ph

How to cite this paper: Caballero, M. A. G. (2024). Re-Examining the Ibalong: An Indigenous Bikolano Epic or a Spanish Poem? *Advances in Literary Study*, 12, 369-388. <https://doi.org/10.4236/als.2024.124029>

Received: December 1, 2023

Accepted: October 28, 2024

Published: October 31, 2024

Copyright © 2024 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

This paper critically investigated the origins and cultural roots of the Ibalong, a renowned Bikolano epic, questioning its classification as an indigenous narrative or a product of Spanish influence. Through a comprehensive review of related literature, the paper explored existing references about the Ibalong, shedding light on divergent perspectives. The study aimed to elucidate the blurred boundaries between indigenous and colonial influences on the epic's narrative structure and content. Using a multidisciplinary methodology that combines literary discourse analysis with biographical inquiry, the results and analysis section dissected the elements of an epic as a literary form, as well as its linguistic nuances and thematic elements. Results showed the author reevaluated the Ibalong's cultural identity, offering new insights that challenge prevailing interpretations and conclusions regarding its nature. Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O.F.M. penned the Hispanic Ibalong epic, emphasizing the complex interplay between indigenous and colonial influences in literary traditions.

Keywords

Bikolano Folk Literature, Brain-Text, Hispanicized Poem, Biographical Literary Discourse Analysis

1. Introduction

The Ibalong Epic is a traditional Bicolano epic from the Bicol region in the Philippines. It tells the story of the legendary heroes Handyong, Baltog, and Bantong, who embark on a series of adventures to protect their homeland from mythical creatures and challenges. The epic features powerful characters, including the woman serpent Oryol and the wild boar Rabot. Throughout the narrative, the heroes exhibit courage, strength, and resilience as they face various trials. The Ibalong Epic not only serves as entertainment, but it also preserves the rich cultural

heritage and mythology of the Bicolanos (Ma. Guerrero, 2013).

Scholars agree that ordinary people were responsible for the creation of folk literature (Burne, 1914). Archaeology teaches us that ordinary people spread literature through oral storytelling using characters, such as pictographs in Greece long before Homeric poetry existed (Zhenzhao, 2019). Similarly, the tales of Mt. Asog in Bikol predated the Ibalong Epic, existing both in oral or written forms (Conde, 2007). Oral literature, whether oral or written, exists in the carrier's text (Zhenzhao, 2019). The Ibalong Epic is an example of Bicol's oral literature. It is a long narrative poem that covers ancient sites and represents pre-Hispanic traditions and culture (Espinás, 1996), is one of Bicol's oral pieces of literature. In this study, Bikolano Folk Literature refers to genres of literature from Bicol and has pre-colonial cultural narratives about traditions, practices, and events in Bicol Region. Spanish poets define Spanish poetry as native poetry that incorporates traces of Spanish (European) colonial texts and contexts.

This study arose from the essential need to revisit cultural narratives to accurately understand their origins and influences. The Ibalong epic, which is a cornerstone of Bikolano heritage, particularly in literature studies, has garnered scholarly attention, but its classification as either an indigenous creation or a Spanish-infused composition remains unclear. Recognizing the profound impact of colonialism on indigenous narratives, this study aimed to address this ambiguity. The research aimed to contribute to a nuanced understanding of cultural identity, linguistic evolution, and the intricate interplay between indigenous and external influences in shaping literary traditions by exploring the intricacies of the Ibalong.

Merito Espinas translated a Hispanicized Ibalong poem into English. Consequently, Zacarias Lla Lorino translated the epic into Bicol, preserving the structure of the literary sense of Hispanicization and the semiotics of culture. The manifesto of brain texts from the past serves as a potential source of knowledge about cultural heritage and the preservation of Bicol identity. The Ibalong was allegedly a fragment of a pre-Hispanic epic poem, according to Calleja (1992), Espinas (1996), O'Brien (1968), Conde (2003), and Gerona (2019). Was the fragmentary epic, Ibalong, published in Bicol in the late 19th century a pre-Hispanic epic or a Hispanic poem?

The general goal of this study was to present a paradigm for the re-examining Ibalong as an indigenous Bikolano epic or a Spanish poem. Numerous studies have examined Ibalong as an epic in Bicol, and the *Libmanan Historico Cultural Society* (2021) asserts that Fray Bernardino Melandreras wrote the Ibalong Epic. However, the ongoing debate about who recorded Ibalong in Spanish remains unresolved for new educators and folklore researchers, prompting this attempt to present a paradigm that could provide a hint of the answer. To achieve the main objective of presenting the theories and scholarly standpoints logically, the following specific objectives were formulated: 1) utilize biography to determine the Hispanic brain text and the Indigenous brain text in Bikol Ibalong; 2) trace the epic conventions in the Ibalong poem to codify the Hispanic and indigenous brain

texts present; and 3) develop a paradigm that illustrates concepts in re-examining the Ibalong as an indigenous Bikolano epic and the Ibalong as a Spanish poem.

The 14th Vice President of the Philippines, [Robredo \(2019\)](#), emphasized the need to examine the tales and narratives that shape our location in order to understand the present and our national identity.

2. Methodology

The discourse analysis methodology was used to study the Ibalong and determine whether it is Spanish poetry or an Indigenous Bikolano epic.

According to [Maingueneau \(2010\)](#), the fundamental unit of discourse analysis is the pair text/genre pair. The restriction can be explained by the historical context in which discursive approaches have evolved.

Discourse Analysis of the historical facts of the author's life, along with social conditions of the period, is a method known as biographical literary criticism ([Merriam-Webster, 1997](#)) and [Literary Criticism \(2024\)](#). According to [Ang \(2009\)](#), historicism critically examines the culture and civilization that gave rise to literature, focusing on the author's identity, source, intention, and objective in writing. An analysis of Friar Melendreras' historical and biographical background suggested that his own experiences had a significant impact on the creation of the Ibalong Epic.

The researcher utilized [Maingueneau's \(2010\)](#) methodology to ascertain the genesis of the Ibalong Epic. Discourse analysis, an approach to studying literature whose direction was to present a paradigm of Ibalong as oral and written literary brain texts of Bikolano natives or Spanish friars, was used. This type of desk review analysis emphasized the social, cultural, and historical contextual meaning of language in the literary genre. This discourse analysis incorporated biographical context was utilized to identify brain text association content, analyze words and phrases, and examine the structure and conventions of the Ibalong Epic. Critical discourse analysis explained [Van Dijk, Teun A. \(2001\)](#) provides mode or perspective of theorizing, analysis and application throughout the whole field, and a useful tool to see the critical perspective of theorizing to find a diverse area as conversation analysis and narrative analysis.

According to [Luo \(2023\)](#), an examination of a text's structure can reveal how it establishes emphasis or constructs a story, and one can analyze texts by applying the conventions and communicative objectives of their genre.

The scholarly reviews of published studies on Ibalong, also known as Handiong, Ibalon, Ibal, and Ybalong, were used. Additionally, interviews were conducted with Bicol historians and priest researchers to gather diverse perspectives and empirical knowledge on Ibalong as literary texts, prehistoric codes, Hispanic, and Indigenous brain texts. The work conducted by [Zhenzhao \(2019\)](#) explored the correlation between brain text and written text within the context of ethical literary appraisal. This research, by merging the evaluated discourse analyses produced by the scholars, effectively constructed a discourse analysis design for re-

examining the Ibalong as an indigenous Bikolano epic or a Spanish poetry. The written texts were utilized to examine the brain text of Bicolano native inhabitants and Friar Melendreras.

The works of researchers who analyzed the Ibalong Epic and rendered it into Bicol, Filipino (Tagalog), and English languages from the Spanish language, which is considered the oldest and most ancient written form of the Bicolano Ibalong Epic, served as significant resources for investigating the original sources of the Ibalong Epic and analyzing its underlying text.

This study attempted to give evidence to attribute the recording of Ibalong to Melendreras by reassessing the classification of Ibalong as either an indigenous Bikolano epic or a Spanish poem. The analysis employed the triangulation method: the first basis of the analysis was the biography of the Franciscan Friar, Fray Melendreras; second was the history of his stay and priesthood service in Libmanan, Camarines Sur, and Guinobatan, Albay, the adjacent provinces in the region of Bicol, Philippines; third was the literary genre and text analysis to decode the native brain text carrier and the Spanish brain text recorder to ascertain foreign and native semiotics; The support for the detailed understanding of the intricate interrelationship between indigenous and foreign literary forms and the history of Ibalong publications and translations was also utilized to substantiate the claim that Fray Melendreras authored the Ibalong Epic in its original form.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1. Biography to Determine the Hispanic Brain Text and the Indigenous Brain Text in Bikol Ibalong

The biography of Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., and the history of his stay in Bicol, as well as personal engagements with the natives in Bicol, led to the claim that he wrote the Ibalong poem in Spanish.

Fray Bernardino del Melendreras was born in Gijon, Asturias, Spain, in 1815 (Hornedo, 1990). Spain served as his formative education, where he developed his formal education and profound knowledge because of exposure in theology, philosophy, history, and literature when he entered the Franciscan seminary of San Jose de Salamanca at the age of Seventeen.

On February 11, 1839, he arrived in the Philippines and continued his studies for the priesthood. (Carlos, 2018). Given his European background, we should consider his influence when examining the epic's creation. He likely immersed himself in European literary works, particularly Spanish literature and Roman and Greek mythology. He read the epics of Homer and Hesiod or some verses of ancient poets in Scandinavia, Greece, Rome, etc.

While studying in Spain, he developed the concept of folklore, or the folkloric structure of literature. Considering the timing of his education and the boom of folklore studies in Europe, it is worth asking if his collective knowledge and experiences influenced the writing of the Ibalong Epic? At the peak of his education, the region extensively disseminated books on ancient European literature. During

this period, [Doherty and Cornog \(1997\)](#) reported the establishment of many archives and museums; the scholars' popular reference texts in the nineteenth century were folklorist readings; and the expansion of folklore studies in Europe began in 1812. During this period, when folklore was the predominant reading in schools, and three (3) years before the birth of Fray Melendreras, the vast collection of folklore held by scholars across Europe inspired them to begin writing and publishing oral literature in various genres. Fray Bernardino del Melendreras grew up during the time of the development of writing, publishing, and reading traditionally derived and orally transmitted literature and material culture in Europe.

Fray Melendreras's exposure to writing folklore, stemming from his education in Spain, shaped him as a folklorist during his time in the Philippines. Folklorists, in particular, concentrated solely on writing about rural natives, preferably those who were uneducated and belonged to tribes or communities untouched by modern ways.

3.1.1. Author's Brain Text

The author's brain texts in writing the Ibalong poem are integral sources of building blocks of primary knowledge to form the written texts from the original oral texts. The written texts of the Ibalong poem serve as valuable sources of information for studying the selected author and the poem's translations. The Spanish poem was translated into Filipino by scholars, who debated on the author of the poem.

These writers and Bicolano scholars engaged in a dispute about the true authorship of the Ibalong Epic, which the inquiry exposed. [Espinás \(1996\)](#) attributed the authorship of "Ibal" to Franciscan Friar Bernardino Melendreras, who subsequently called it the "Ibalong Epic" narrative. However, some historians, such as [Calleja \(1992\)](#), acknowledged that Franciscan Friar Jose Castaño contributed to the "Handiong" (Ibalong Epic) along with its translation. [Realubit \(2022\)](#) addressed the significance of the story of Handiong as the folk epic of Bikol people instead of highlighting the Ibalong as an epic. Realubit identified "Handiong" rather than "Ibalong" as the title of the Epic. This is also evident in [O'Brien's \(1968\)](#) publication of the Bicol Epic poem, "Handiong", which was translated from the Spanish text by Carlos and Javier Centenera, with assistance from Carlos Eleazar into Bicol in 1968.

Re-examination of the brain-text of the Ibalong epic is crucial, as is scrutinizing the restricted life narratives and historical accounts of the two Friars' presence in Bicol to determine who was responsible for creating the Hispanicized adaptation of the Ibalong epic. Importantly, acknowledging the ownership of the Ibalong Epic could enhance its literary quality, and incorporating the innovative Ibalong Epic into various literary genres such as plays, dramas, and short stories to promote Bicol culture would not mean abandoning the original Spanish-written fragment of the Ibalong Epic.

The Bicolano Scholar community has recognized one of the Friars as the authentic author of the Ibal/Handiong/balong Epic, and [Table 1](#) presents a comparison of their information.

[Table 1](#) shows that, when certain significant details about the two Friars—Fray

Bernardino Melendreras and Fray Jose Castaño—were compared, it became clear that Friar Melendreras had a longer relationship with the local Bicolanos and that other authors had noted his poetic and folkloric abilities. There is probable evidence that some of his poems were about nature and mountains when he wrote poems on the fires of Mayon, the magnificence of Lingyon Hill, the flowers of the field, and the legend of their forests (Gerona, 2013: p. 53). Hornedo (1990) also described him as a priest-missionary among the Bicolanos and a poet, based on the body of poetry he left behind and the testimonies of his contemporaries.

Table 1. Comparison of information.

Name of Friar	Fray Bernardino Melendreras	Fray Jose Castaño
Title	Ibal	Handiong
Address	Gijón, Asturias, Spain	Hiniesta, Zamora, Spain.
Date of Birth	September 03, 1815	December 28, 1854
Priest Vows	Ordained in Manila and served on 1844 (21 y/o)	May 2, 1874 (20 y/o)
Sent to Manila	February 11, 1839 as student (24 y/o)	June 22, 1875 (21 y/o)
Work in the Philippines	Parish priest (29 y/o) Quipayo and Bombon from 1844 to 1846. Transferred to Libmanan in 1847 and in Guinobatan	Administrator in Camalig, Albay in 1878 (24 y/o) Minister in Lupi, Libmanan and Ligaw. He spent 17 years in Bicol.
Date ends the term of service	October 07, 1867 (52 y/o) Manila, Philippines (Natural causes)	Returned to Spain and became rector of the Colegio de Misiones de Almagro in Burgos
Skills/Talents	Writer, Poet, Philosopher, Collector, Folklorist	Writer

Fray Melendreras was a Hispanized epic writer, who wrote in a Hispanic style, but his content was indigenous. In that era, his poems were in the international appeal category and structured in hybrid text form.

Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., documented the folk tale of the Bicolano natives, writing it in Spanish poetry. This work is now called the Ibalong Epic by Espinas (1996), and it has been referenced by the translators of the said epic. Authors and translators produced forms of Ibalong texts that essentially delineate literature as a course of replicating, recollecting, and representing brain texts structured in their particular time.

3.1.2. Bikol Native Brain Text and Fray Bernardino De Melendreras, O. F. M. Brain Text

Before the Spaniards came the Bicolano natives were the first-hand bearers of

Ibalong's text. Prior to any written text was created by writers or translators, the original sources of oral stories were the Bikolano natives. There were native rules before the existence of rules of the Spaniards, the Bicolanos, along with other peoples in the Philippines, established their own system of government, engaged in trade through the barter system with Asian countries, and practiced their own religion, literature, and cultural rituals (Reyes, 1992). In other words, there was already a civilization (Conde, 2003) before the arrival of the Spaniards, especially during the time Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., He served as a priest in Bicol from 1841 to 1867, where he derived the oral texts of the Epic from the stories of the natives. Apparently, during his stay in Bicol, Fray Bernardino translated the narrative text into Spanish, the oldest Ibalong text found and republished in the Malanyaon (1991) book, and identified Fray Bernardino de Melendreras as the true author, not Fray Jose Castaño.

Fray Jose Castaño was solicited to contribute to the Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino, edited by Retana (1995), as stated in a Wikipedia article. His most renowned work was a cultural treatise titled Breve Noticias acerca del origen, religión, creencias y supersticiones de los antiguos Indios del Bicol, which examined the ancient Bicolanos' beliefs, superstitions, and myths. At the conclusion of the Fray Jose Castaño monograph, he appended a 60-stanza epic narrative in Spanish about the exploits of the Ibalong Epic. While some Bicolano literary figures, researchers, and poets believed that Fray Jose Castaño authored the Spanish translation, viewing this Handiong epic as part of his contributions, "this research provides evidence through thorough investigation that he is neither the creator nor the translator of the Ibalong Epic.

Prominent international Bicol historian Dr. Danilo Gerona (2013) provided additional proof in his history book "Guinobatan" that Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., was both a poet and a literary cultivator. Gerona claimed that multiple sources reported Fray Melendreras's compositions on flora, nature, and volcanoes and that he relocated to Guinobatan, Albay, in 1865.

The term "Pre-Hispanic brain text" refers to the indigenous Bicolano oral stories that were known to the author before being transcribed into written stories in Spanish language and taking the form of an epic genre between 1844 and 1865. He, as a friar and poet, stayed in Bicol for almost 22 years: 2 years in Quipayo and Bombon; 18 years in Libmana, Camarines Sur; and only 2 years in Guinobatan, Albay, showed in Table 1. His stays in various places in Bicol evidently exposed him to communication with the various pre-Hispanic natives who shared organic texts about Bicol tales. Furthermore, his role as the local minister provided him with additional opportunities to gather diverse narratives from ordinary people. Evidently, he listened to the baptized natives' stories.

In 1875, Fedor Jagor described Fray Bernardeno de Melendreras as a poet, and the study identified him as the author of the Ibalong Epic. In Jagor's book, Travels in the Philippines, he mentioned Fray Melendreras as a priest, "who, possessing poetical skills and being reputed as a natural philosopher, collected and named

lovely beetles and shells and dedicated the most elegant little sonnets” during his visit to Libmanan in 1861.

He endured a grave sickness at Guinobatan, Albay, and passed away in Manila on October 6, 1867. This occurrence indicated that Fray Melendreras resided in Guinobatan for a period of two years. In his first year in Guinobatan, he presumably authored the epic and poetry in Spanish, or persisted in composing the Ibalong epic. The study believed that his inadequate understanding of the Bicol dialect, due to its multiple varieties, constrained him to write his creative works in Spanish and express their meaning. In his second year at Guinobatan Parish, he fell ill, which probably limited his travels in Ibalong (formerly Albay), thereby elucidating the scarcity of location names in Albay within the Ibalong Epic compared to the abundance of names from Camarines Sur, where he lived for two decades. The original Spanish text of the Ibalong Epic does not include Mount Mayon; nevertheless, the Bicol translation incorporates it found in the book of [Espinás \(1996\)](#).

According to [Jocano \(1975\)](#), the Ibalon must undoubtedly be pre-Hispanic in origin. The structure or form of Ibalong as an epic is attributed to Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., while the content originates from the native inhabitants of Bicol. The friar used the native stories to explain their observations of the surroundings. According to [Bulfinch \(1994\)](#), ancient pagans, lacking information, developed their own unique storytelling methods. The ancient Bicol natives could chant stories or sketch and scribble short poems. The native Bicolanos may have had a rich imagination to explain the things and events they encountered in their surroundings. Their narrative imaginations took the form of folktales, reflecting their intelligence at the time, but not in the literary form of an epic with standard characteristics.

An epic is a genre of poetry that is long and narrative written in an elevated style that celebrates heroic achievements and addresses themes of historical, cultural, or legendary significance. ([Doherty & Cornog, 1997](#)). The word epic has been derived from the Greek word epikos, which means a word, song or speech ([Rafiq, 2023](#)).

3.2. Epic Conventions: Structure of the Ibalong Poem

The structure of the Ibalong poem as an epic follows its unique conventions. Epic poetry is a type of narrative poem. According to [Epic Poem Analysis \(2023\)](#), it recounts the events of valiant exploits, typically performed by characters who transcend human nature. Epic poems are often regarded as the original form of poetry. [Bascara \(2003\)](#) likely included the conventions of world literary masterpieces in her book on the universal characteristics of epic poems. Both [Bascara \(2003\)](#) and [Mahavidyalaya \(2020\)](#) presented that Epic has two types, the folk epic is primarily composed in oral form, whereas the art or literary epic is composed in written form. The author of the literary epic is often a renowned figure, whereas the author of a folk epic may be a common individual. However, this study proves

that the Ibalong epic originated from many native individuals before it was transferred into written form by Fray Melendreras.

[Pellegrino \(2012\)](#) outlines several conventions and a formula for epic poetry, following the pattern of the ancient Greek epics of Homer and Hesiod. These conventions and formulas are significantly relevant in the analysis of the Ibalong poem, a Bicolano fragmentary epic published in the late 19th century, which was classified as either a pre-Hispanic epic or a Hispanic poem. The manifesto of ancient brain texts may contain information regarding cultural heritage and the safeguarding of Bicol identity, but it is written in the conventional pattern of the ancient Greek epics of Homer and Hesiod.

3.2.1. The Ibalong Epic Conventions Distinguishes between Primary Sources and Secondary Sources: Brain Text

Epic is divided into two types: the “primary” convention, also known as the traditional or classical epic, which is based on legends, the traditional heroic period, and certain traditional literature. The “secondary” norm of epic, which was written down from the beginning and relates to authentic native material, also includes clever poets who self-consciously altered features of classic epic for particular ideological purposes ([Merriam-Webster Literary Guide, 1997: pp. 165-166](#)).

The language (text) of the written Ibalong Epic published in [Merito Espinas \(1996\)](#) and [Jaime T. Malanyaon \(1991: pp. 510-523\)](#), which is familiar and nearly identical in Bicol and English translations, is used to re-examine the distinctions in texts that codified primary and secondary conventions.

The indigenous Ibalong people’s pre-existing ideas served as the main source for recording secondary source information to create an epic ([Doherty & Cornog, 1997](#)). Among the native names found in the Ibalong Epic are local names of Bicol mountains and volcanoes, such as ASLONG, ASOG, HANTIK, ISAROG, KULASI, and MASARAGA. Additionally, the epic portrays the ancient culture, traditions, and cultural practices of the actual settlement, exemplified by words such as BANGA, CORON, KALAN, PASO, MUNGAN, and SURAL, all of which code as native words in Bicol and indicate a structured language. These words implied the existence of a pre-hispanicized civilization in Bicol ([Table 2](#)).

It is presented in Stanza 39 from the Ibalong Epic, a Spanish text that is claimed to be the original ([Malanyaon, 1991: p. 510](#)), along with translations in English and Bikol texts, to elucidate the well-established Bikolano cultural tradition and civilization prior to Spanish colonization. CORON and BANGA mean earthwares, mentioned in the Ibalong epic, that indicated pre-Hispanic words and civilized settlements in Bicol. In his edited book, [James O’Brien \(1968\)](#) reported the discovery of eight pieces of BANGA (earthwares) at Major Padua’s farm in Payatan Goa in 1969. In 1933, Luis Dato collected numerous pieces near the Bato and Baao lakes in Minalabac, primarily from the 15th century. An archeologist also found numerous additional pieces and artifacts in caves in Albay from 1879 to 1881 in Bagacay, Bacon, Sorsogon, Catanduanes in 1881, and Ticao and Rio Guinobatan in Masbate. According to [Zhenzhao \(2019\)](#), our understanding of

Table 2. Ibalong epic stanza 39 Spanish and English and bikol translations.

Spanish Ibalong Epic	English Ibalon in Bikol	Bikol Handlong
Fray Bernardino de Melandreras, OFM (Malanyaon, 1991)	Leoncio F. Eloppe (Translator) (Malanyaon, 1991)	Centenera (Translator) (O'Brien, 1968, Stanza 39)
Invento la gorgoreta, Coron, calan, y paso y otros various utensils el pigmeo dinahon	The earthen jar, pot, stove and bowl And utensils I can't recall The workmanship was done and all By pigmy DInahon not tall.	Pagkatapos kaito an daod hinaman An koron, an kalan An paso siring man Asin ang iba pang mga kasangkapan

archeology teaches us that the fact that literature has been distributed by oral transmission does not always imply that there has been no presence of characters.

Stanza 39 suggests that the Spanish author's brain text did not dominate the original brain text of the folk storytellers. Most likely, even though the language is Spanish, the details are organic tales about local places and native settlements, which serve as significant linguistic structures or text formulas in an epic. The Ibalong Epic, a Spanish epic, would not exist without indigenous storytelling. It is about the primary source and secondary source (Doherty & Cornog, 1997) of brain text (Zhenzhao, 2019). In relation to the author's formula for writing the Ibalong epic, the primary source consisted of the oral transmission of stories from native inhabitants in Bicol to Fray Melendreras. Fray Melendreras' knowledge of how to write a poem in the epic genre was the secondary source. In his study, Cabrera (2016) explained that other sources claiming to have written the first epics were products of preliterate societies (Bicolano natives) and oral poetic traditions, where poetry is transmitted to the audience (Fray Melendreras) by purely oral means and then later written down by either single author. The audience became the author of Ibalong Epic.

3.2.2. Ibalong Epic Convention on the Invocation: Calling for Inspiration

Another Epic Convention is that the writer or poet summons the muses, or prays to them, for heavenly inspiration to recount the narrative of a great hero. The Muse is a significant figure in an epic. The Muse is a norm in epic known as The Invocatio, which calls for inspiration. The narrative opens with an invocation or petition to a deity, gods, or semi-divine beings natural in classic epics which are cited by Homer in "The Iliad" Translated by Samuel Butler, 1898 (OMNIKA (2020) and by Virgil in "The Aeneid", Translated by John Dryden, 1697. The poet pleads for a benediction, something supernatural to help him in his endeavor. The Odyssey starts with these lines:

Sing in me, Muse, and through me, tell the story,
of that man, skilled in all ways of contending,

Homer (1961), Translation by Robert Fitzgerald.

According to stanza 1 of the Ibalong Epic, the bard KADUNGUNG or KADUNUNG sung the Ibalong Epic at the behest of ILING.

Stanza 1

Kadungung, kindly tell us all

About the old times of Handyong,

Sing with your lyre of Silverstone

The sweet enchantment of Aslong.

Ibalong Epic: English Translation (Espinass, 1996)

Kadunung is a pre-Hispanic appellation and the supplementary appellation of Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., denoting the Muse, a prominent character in ancient European epics. There seems to be evidence that Fray Melendreras was cognizant of the creative and literary influences exerted by Homer and Hesoid. invoking the MUSE, one of Zeus's nine daughters, and deities acted as sources of inspiration for the epos (poems) of both Homer and Hesoid.

More precisely, this incident took place during the Spanish Era, namely in the 1850s (Espinass, 1996: p. 23). This implies that Kadunung is a Bikol name that carries the meaning of wisdom (Espinass, 1996). The word Kadungung is derived from a pre-Hispanic brain text, but it functions as a MUSE, a kind of Spanish brain text specifically used in poetry. The name Kadunung is a semiotic element of the primary source, while functional meaning of Kadunung in Ibalong Epic is a semiotic element of the secondary source.

3.2.3. Ibalong Epic Convention on Lofty Characters (Kings and Heroes) Brain Text

The poem hails and prays to the Divine and Muse, also thanks the Muses, the King, for their inspiration. Similarly, the Ibalong Epic has three heroes: Baltog, Bantong, and Handiong, who goes by the name Hade, which means king. Fray Melendreras, who had studied European epics, was able to combine the convention of an epic, which includes lofty figures such as muses, monarchs, and lyres, with Homer's general self-consciousness and the manner in which Homeric texts interact with different components of epos. All ancient authors addressed the Muses at the outset of their works. Handiong, the first hero described in Stanza 1 of the Ibalong Epic, and Baltog is another hero who had noble personalities; he hailed from Botavara (India) and was of Lipod race or lineage.

Table 3 presents that a Spanish author composed the Ibalong in his native tongue. According to post-structuralist theories, when they learn a language, individuals assume the role of cultural subjects. Therefore, many civilizations possess distinct perspectives on reality, expressed via their own languages.

3.2.4. Ibalong Epic Convention on Medias Res Brain Text

In the Bikolano Ibalong Epic, the adventures of the three Ibalong Epic heroes, Baltog, Handiong, and Bantong in the Bikolano Ibalong Epic begin at the middle stage of their life, in accordance with the well-known Epic literary practice of in medias res. Within the epic, the two protagonists, Handiong and Bantong,

Table 3. Ibalong epic stanza 9 Spanish and English translation.

Spanish Ibalong Epic	English Ibalon in Bikol
Fray Bernardino de Melandreras, OFM (Malanyaon, 1991)	Leoncio F. Elopre (Translator) (Malanyaon, 1991)
Fue Baltog el primer hombre	Baltog, man worthy of our praise
Que esta yiera habitó,	Who pioneered this lovely place
Oriundo de Botavara	From Botavara did he trace
De raza de lipod.	His birth, Lipod root of his race

performed extraordinary deeds yet their origins remain ambiguous.

Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., epitomized the European Epic traditions and poetic genres that were prevalent during his time. Undeniably, he composed poetry that had a global appeal, and as a writer of folklore, his poems were shaped into hybrid texts. By assuming the role of a recorder, he skillfully converted Indigenous Bicol poetry into a Hispanic format while preserving its authentic indigenous essence, based on [Conde's analysis \(2009\)](#).

4. Paradigm of Concepts to Re-Examine the Ibalong as an Indigenous Bikolano Epic and an Ibalong as Spanish Poem

The paradigm demonstrates the results of re-examining the Ibalong Epic through the eyes of two carriers: an indigenous Bikolano from the pre-Hispanic era and a Spanish poet friar who resided in Bikol in the nineteenth century. According to the philosopher Thomas Kuhn, a paradigm should comprise “the practices that define a scientific discipline at a certain point in time” ([Shuttleworth & Wilson 2008](#)).

Figure 1 presents a paradigm of ideas that encompasses the distinct and established patterns identified in theory application. [Zhenzhao \(2019\)](#) created brain text theory; [Mc Gowan](#) mentioned in her book that [Malpa and Wake \(2006\)](#) utilized Saussure's structuralist theory to explain the language in the primary and secondary source content and form of an epic; and according to [Guillemette and Cossette \(2006\)](#), Umberto Eco developed the field of semiotics, which covered quite a diversity of signs. developed the field of semiotics, which covers quite a diversity of signs. Eco has developed a classification in which he distinguished between artificial and natural signs.

In the paradigm, the concepts are visualized in rectangulars, circulars, and arrows as illustrations of the congested discourse analysis to reexamine the Ibalong epic brain writings. Two rectangular shapes, each representing a distinct phase in the pre-Hispanicization and Hispanicization of the Ibalong Epic in Bicol, connect with small arrows to demonstrate the concepts of the two carriers.

The Zhenzhao Brain Text Theory utilizes pre-Hispanic Ibalon or Bikol mythology to posit that oral literature, whether oral or written, is present in the carrier's text. There were mother texts; the common source of the oral literature circulated

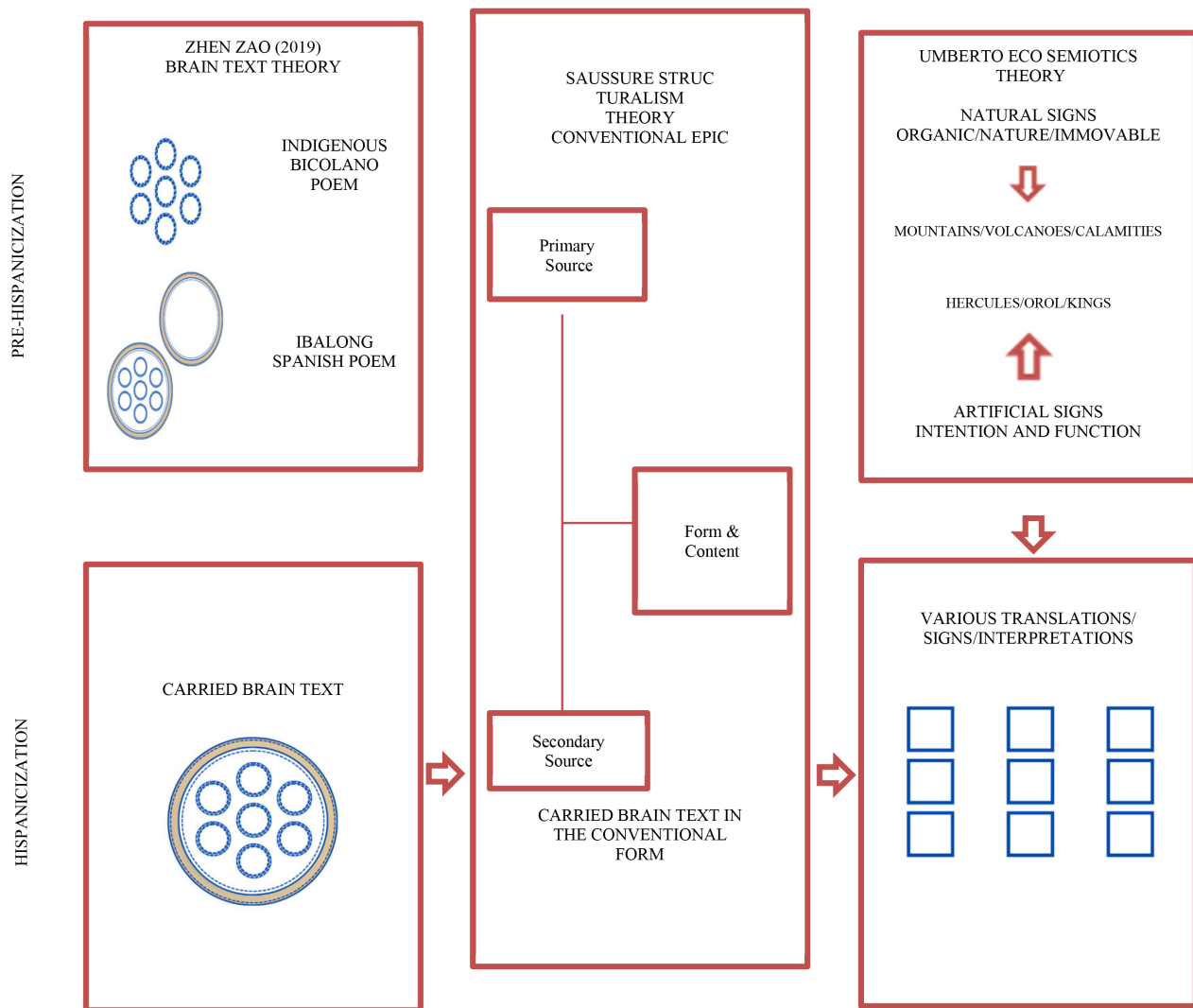


Figure 1. Paradigm of concepts.

as brain text (p. 12). The perspective posits that the folk stories of Indigenous tribes in Bicol, which encompass subjects such as eruptions, disasters, animals, locations, plants, nature, settlement patterns, and heroic actions against monster beasts, transform into literary tales as they are passed down orally from generation to generation, represented by the dispersed tiny circles (Indigenous Bicolano poem). The small circle near the dispersed smaller circles represented Friar Bernardino Melendreras’ education and exposure to folklore and epic tropes. The bigger circle represents the Spanish recorder’s brain text, which followed European epic standards, while the smaller circle includes the brain text of Fray Melendreras, who spent over 26 years in the Philippines, mostly in Bicol.

The rectangle below explains that, through his folklore education, knowledge, experiences as a poet, writer, folklorist, and talents, he brought the inhabitants’ folktales to life. He most likely learned from Homer and Hesiod’s poetry. Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., recorded the Ibalong Epic in Spanish during

his tenure.

The big circle, which contains smaller circles, depicts the Spanish Ibalong epic, a collection of pre-Hispanic folktales documented by the indigenous Bikol people. The Ibalong Epic, which represents the derived implication from the analysis and findings, is Hispanicized in appearance but incorporates pre-Hispanic content and substance.

The middle rectangle symbolizes the Ibalong Epic, which has a composite language framework. It combines pre-Hispanic and Hispanic languages in terms of form and content. The epic's content relates to the aspects of a narrative epic, such as place, characters, themes, and conflicts or struggles, while the language in terms of form pertains to European epic traditional structure. Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism investigates European epic norms as reflected in the Spanish original Ibalong epic and its translations into English, Filipino, and Bicol languages. The linguistic structure underscores its origins, with indigenous folktales serving as the primary and secondary sources of the text in the Ibalong Epic, which underpins Hispanicized poetry.

One of the European epic conventions is the difference between a source formed by oral tradition and narrative literature and a secondary source purposefully developed by a poet who modified elements of classic epics (Doherty & Cor-nog, 1997). The study's idea of main and secondary sources alludes to an epic's linguistic standards. The poem's language, which depicts pre-Hispanic Bikolano traditional life and settlements (Lipod, Coron, Sural, Tabac, etc.), locations (Mt. Masaraga, Mt. Asog, Mt. Isarog, Nabua, Libmanan, etc.), events (Baha, Delubyo, Pagtugdas, etc.), and time (eruptions and flooding), is considered a primary source.

Saussure argued that thought is a vague, uncharted nebula (a diffused astronomical object). There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language (McGowan, 2006). This perspective of Saussure says that before the language, there were no prior thoughts. Although objects were present around events and actions, there was a lack of clarity and distinct thought until the emergence of language, as humans possess the ability to generate both thought and sound. The ancient Bicol volcanoes, such as ASLONG, ASOG, HANTIK, ISAROG, KULASI, and MASARAGA (Ibalong, Espinas, 1996: p. 85), are old landmarks and settlements found in the Ibalong epic. Before Spanish settlement, the Bicolano natives did not identify or think of mountains or places as codes of existing language; these volcanoes were simply existing objects in their surroundings.

The secondary source comprises the Spanish poet's mental notes, which he used to create an epic. These works incorporate his interpretation of traditional epic elements, such as the use of Muse, Lyre, King, Heroes, Hercules, Oriol, and other non-Bicolano language that denotes and connotes supernaturals, adventures, struggles, and monstrous animals.

Both forms and contents from the primary and secondary sources in the

Ibalong epic are the languages of both the indigenous Bikolanos and the Spanish recorders. The epic structure is based on the brain-text passages from both sources. The organized language standards of the Ibalong Epic combine the functions of native brain text with Spanish poetry, which is the brain text carried in the conventional structure.

According to McGowan (2006), prior to Saussure, people thought of language as nothing more than a mechanism for recognizing things. Prior to Saussure, people regarded language merely as a method for designating an objective reality that existed before and outside of language itself. The pre-language existed, serving as a marker to identify things and writings as cultural semiotics (Maingueneau, 2010).

This study applied Umberto Eco's classification theory to analyze scientific discourse, focusing specifically on the Ibalong carrier brain text of indigenous inhabitants, which represents the natural signs, and the Hispanicized text in Ibalong. The study recognizes the literary words used by Fray Bernardino Melendreras to artistically write local narratives with the characteristics of an epic, based on Hesiod's and Homer's epic patterns, as artificial signs.

Natural signs are associated with natural events or things, such as the location of mountains, trees, and forms of water. Human agents, for example, produce unintentional signs such as animal deaths, tool malfunctions, and weapons. Human agents intentionally create artificial signs to symbolize lofty characters and praises, like muses or lyres. These are intentionally produced or included in the poem to write it as an epic.

The final rectangle in the paradigm illustrates that the Ibalong Epic incorporates semiotics in natural indicators like mountains, volcanoes, and natural disasters. According to Umberto Eco, senders always create and actively generate signs as function signals. Hercules is a semiotic portrayal of Ibalong's Hispanicization, based on Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M.'s brain text. The poet employed the Greek mythological figure Hercules, whose name signifies strength, to portray Baltog, one of the three heroes in the Ibalong epic, as possessing herculean strength. Herculean from the name Hercules, a purposefully made or borrowed symbol to artistically include because of its special meaning in Greek mythology.

The natural signs in the Ibalong Epic survived in the many language translations made by Bicolano writers and scholars. The natural semiotics used to trace the pre-Hispanic period in Bicol are the knots in the translations that determine the braintext writings of local and Spanish poets. In certain versions of the Ibalong Epic, the proper names signified natural semiotics; however, Bicolano scholars, writers, and translators who studied the epic distinguished the brain text of Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., on the Greek names Hercules, Muse, and Lyre. Therefore, the small boxes in the paradigm display translations in several languages, alluding to separate brain messages.

As Fray Bernardino de Melendreras transcribed the oral narrations from the Bicol inhabitants, new language or expressions were used that established the denotations of the carrier of the text, which differed from paper as the carrier of

symbols. It was a neologism (Zhenzhao, 2019), since he employed Spanish writings based on local concepts. His writing incorporated the native's thoughts into his own. The Ibalong Epic takes inspiration from both the community and the individual. Different translations of brain writings offer an additional semiotic tool for future discourse analysis.

5. Conclusion

The claim that Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., authored the Ibalong poem in Spanish is based on his biography, the account of his residence in Bicol, and his personal engagements with the local indigenous population.

Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., used poetry to document the traditional narrative of the Bicolano people in Spanish, today known as the Ibalong Epic.

Ibalong texts, created by authors and translators, essentially define literature as a process of replicating, recollecting, and representing brain texts structured in the specific era of their creation.

Incorporating elements of Spanish Epic conventions, the Ibalong poem codifies the brain texts of indigenous and Hispanic peoples. The initial Ibalong Epic convention distinguishes between primary and secondary brain text sources.

The indigenous Ibalong people's pre-existing concepts were used as a primary source for recording secondary source information, which was subsequently used to construct an epic. The Ibalong Epic records the local names of Bicol Mountains and volcanoes, among other native names. Furthermore, the epic depicts the ancient culture, traditions, and cultural practices of the actual settlement, as evidenced by the use of words, such as BANGA, CORON, KALAN, PASO, MUNGAN, and SURAL. These words are native to Bicol and suggest a structured language. These terms suggested the existence of a pre-Hispanic civilization in Bicol.

The brain text of the Spanish author did not dominate the original mind text of the folk storytellers. The details are likely organic narratives about local locations and native settlements, which serve as significant linguistic structures or text formulations in an epic, despite the fact that the language is Spanish. Indigenous narrative is essential to the existence of the Ibalong Epic, a Spanish epic.

We investigated and analyzed the Ibalong Epic's original sources and its underlying text using the extant written texts, which were significant resources. Fray Melendreras converted the Ibalong epic from the oral tradition of numerous indigenous peoples into written form.

In the second Epic Convention, the writer or poet invokes the muses or prays to them for divine inspiration in order to narrate the story of a legendary hero. In an epic, the Muse is a significant figure. The Muse is a classic work of epic literature.

The third epic convention brain text for the Ibalong Epic Convention on Lofty Characters (Kings and Heroes) is provided below: Thanking the Muses, the King, for their inspiration, the poem welcomes and prays to the Divine and Muse. In the

same vein, the Ibalong Epic features three heroes: Baltog, Ban-tong, and Handiong, who is also known as Hade, which translates to “king”. Fray Melendreras, who had studied European epics, was able to integrate the convention of an epic, which includes exalted figures such as muses, monarchs, and lyres, with Homer’s general self-awareness and the manner in which Homeric texts interact with various components of epos. At the outset of their works, all ancient authors addressed the Muses. Stanza 1 of the Ibalong Epic introduces Handiong as the first hero, while Baltog, a noble personality from Botavara (India), belongs to the Lipod race or lineage.

The fourth Ibalong Epic Convention on Medias res brain text concepts in the re-evaluation of the Ibalong, both as a Spanish poem and as an indigenous Bikolano epic, are illustrated by the development of a paradigm.

It is essential to re-examine the brain-text of the Ibalong epic and to carefully examine the restricted life narratives and historical accounts of the two Friars’ presence in Bicol in order to identify the individual responsible for the Hispanized adaptation of the Ibalong epic. Recognizing the ownership of the Ibalong Epic could enhance its literary quality. Incorporating the innovative Ibalong Epic into various literary genres such as plays, dramas, and short stories would not abandon the original Spanish-written fragment, thereby promoting Bicol culture. The paradigm’s design implies that the native Bicolanos could have capitalized on their extensive imaginations to clarify the objects and events they encountered in their environment. They transformed their narrative conceptions into folktales, reflecting their intelligence at the time, but not in the literary form of an epic with standard characteristics.

In relation to the author’s formula for composing the Ibalong epic, the primary source was the oral transmission of tales from native inhabitants in Bicol to Fray Melendreras. Fray Melendreras’ expertise in epic poem composition was a secondary source.

The poet employed the Homeric figure Hercules from Greek mythology to describe Baltog, whose name signifies fortitude. Whether intentionally created or borrowed, Hercules holds a unique significance.

Bicolano writers and scholars have preserved the natural signs of the Ibalong Epic in their numerous language translations. The translations’ coils, which identify the brain texts of local and Spanish poets, utilize natural semiotics to trace the prehistoric era in Bicol. Bicolano scholars, writers, and translators who studied the Ibalong Epic distinguished the brain text of Fray Bernardino de Melendreras, O. F. M., on the Greek names Hercules, Muse, and Lyre, despite the fact that the proper names in certain versions of the epic signified natural semiotics. Translations in multiple languages adorn the tiny rectangular areas in the paradigm, suggesting that the brain messages are distinct.

When Fray Bernardino de Melendreras transcribed the oral narratives from the Bicol inhabitants, he used new language or expressions to establish the denotations of the text carrier, which differed from paper as the symbol carrier.

Plagiarism has been present since the introduction of knowledge, communication, and sign comprehension. People transmitted folk stories through word of mouth in ancient times and in non-congested areas like forests, without considering the authenticity of the information or the source of the informant. There is no assertion of authenticity or ownership. In the present study, we re-examined the epic to determine its ownership, recognize its origin, and understand its creative purpose. As time progresses, the Ibalong Epic's epic variants are constantly evolving and adapting to the cultural modernity of each generation. The future of this study is to demonstrate reverence for the original author, the readers, both past and present, and the original Ibalong Epic text. These efforts aim to educate and inform both current and future readers, innovators, and translators about the constant potential for changes in literature due to imitation and exploitation. This will result in the creation of a much more appealing mixed genre to present the Ibalong Epic, thereby sustaining its popularity, significant contribution to the arts and economy, and social, cultural, and historical knowledge in Bicol and the world.

In providing entertainment, the Ibalong Epic also safeguards the Bicolanos' extensive cultural heritage and mythology. The manifesto of brain texts from the past serves as a potential source of knowledge regarding the preservation of Bicol identity and cultural heritage.

6. Recommendations

Bicol-Naga, Bicol-Camarines Sur, and Bicol-Albay each have their own translations of the Ibalong Epic. It is essential that instructional resources for teaching the local language have translations in Bicol-Catanduanes, Bicol-Sorsogon, and Bicol-Masbate in order to comprehensively include the Ibalong Epic as a representation of Bikol folklore throughout both the pre-Hispanic and Hispanic periods.

Future researchers shall perform a comprehensive analysis and examination of the Ibalong Epic to provide young readers with a varied array of ideas and to evaluate the poem from many perspectives.

The Ibalong Epic's translation and adaptation into numerous languages and artistic mediums are a demonstration of artistic freedom and expression. However, it is imperative to preserve the integrity and acknowledgment of the original text of the Ibalong Epic.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Partido State University Research Officials' assistance in the conduct of this study, as well as of the unwavering mentorship of Dr. Danilo Gerona and Ms. Karen Gerona and the editing of this manuscript by Dr. Abelardo Belleza. I am also appreciative of the unconditional support of my husband, Rey Rafael, and my children, Camille Audrey, Shaira Joy, and Vincent Benjamen, my mother

Aurora Gratela and siblings Maria Theresa Gratela-Barrameda and Ben-hur Gratela. I am most grateful to God Almighty for all the blessings I have received.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- (2021). *Libmanan Historico Cultural Society*. <https://www.facebook.com>
- (2023). *Epic Poem Analysis*. <https://poemanalysis.com/genre/epic-poetry/>
- Ang, J. G. (2009). *Kritika, Selected Readings in Philippine Literature from Precolonial to Post Edsa*. Mindshapers.
- Bascara, L. (2003). *World Literature: A Tertiary Textbook for Literature II under the New Curriculum*. Rex Book Store
- Bulfinch, T. (1994). *The Golden Age of Myth and Legend*. The Guernsey Press Co. Ltd.
- Burne, C. S. (1914). *The Handbook of Folklore: Traditional Beliefs, Practices, Customs, Stories and Sayings*. Gruensey Press Co. Inc.
- Cabrera, J. (2016). *Cultural Representation and Masterpieceness in Epic Poetry*. https://www.academia.edu/26846956/Cultural_Representation_and_Masterpieceness_in_Epic_Poetry_1st_Draft
- Calleja, J. C. (1992). *Bikol Maharlika*. JMC Press, Inc.
- Carlos (2018). *Fray Bernardino de Melendreras y de la Trinidad, O.F.M.* <https://www.geni.com>
- Conde, C. M. (2007). The Asog Culture in Ibalong. *Diliman Review*, 58, 12-14.
- Conde, J. C. M. (2003). *The Theory of Kadungung in Ibalong and Osipon*. https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=tEmAO8AAAAI&citation_for_view=tEmAO8AAAAI:WF5omc3nYNoC
- Conde, J. C. M. (2009). *The Asog Culture in Ibalong*. https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=tEmAO8AAAAI&citation_for_view=tEmAO8AAAAI:Y0pCki6q_DkC
- Doherty, K. M., & Cornog, M. W. (1997). *Merriam Webster's: Readers Handbook. Your Complete Guide to Literary Terms*. Massachusettes.
- Espinass, M. (1996). *Ibalong: Bikol Folk Epic-Fragment*. University of Santo Tomas Publishing House.
- Gerona, D. M. (2013). *Guinobatan (1688-1958)*. Bicol Historical Research Center.
- Gerona, D. M. (2019). Idolatria Y Hechiceria: Witchcraft and the Spirits of Resistance in the Early Colonial Philippines. In *International Conference on the 450th Christianization, Hispanization and Urbanization of Luzon* (p. 29). Partido State University.
- Guillemette, L., & Cossette, J. (2006). *The Semiotic Process and the Classification of Signs*. <http://www.signosemio.com/eco/semiotic-process-and-classification-of-signs.asp#Abstract>
- Homer (1961). *The Odyssey* (Translated by Robert Fitzgerald). Anchor Books.
- Hornedo, F. (1990). Bernardino Melendreras's Antologia Poetica and Nineteenth Century Philippine Literary Relations. *Philippine Studies*, 38, Article 6. <https://archium.ateneo.edu/phstudies/vol38/iss4/6/>
- Jocano, F. L. (1975). *Philippine Prehistory: An Anthropological Overview of the*

- Beginnings of Filipino Society and Culture*. Community Publishers.
- Literary Criticism (2024). In *Literature, What Is Biographical Theory?*
<https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/literature-what-biographical-theory-where-453033>
- Luo, A. (2023). *Critical Discourse Analysis/Definition, Guide & Examples*.
<https://www.scribbr.com/statistics/quartiles-quantiles/>
- Ma. Guerrero, A. (2013). *Ibalong—The Bicolano Epic as Spectacle*. Philippine Daily Inquirer.
- Mahavidyalaya, G.P. (2020). *The Epic*.
<https://gpm.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Background-Prose-Readings-EPIC.pdf>
- Maingueneau, D. (2010). *Literature and Discourse Analysis*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232927332_Literature_and_discourse_analysis
- Malanyaon, J. (1991). *Istorya kan Kabikolan (Kabikolan: A History)*. AMS Press.
- Malpa, S., & Wake, P. (2006). *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*. Routledge.
- McGowan, K. (2006). *Structuralism and Semiotics*. Routledge.
- Merriam-Webster (1997). *Reader's Handbook: Your Complete Guide to Literary Terms*. Merriam-Webster.
- O'Brien, J. J. (1968). *The Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Bikol People*. Ateneo de Naga.
- OMNIKA (2020). "The Iliad": English Translation by Samuel Butler.
<https://omnika.org/stable/875>
- Pellegrino, J. (2012). *Epic Conventions*.
<https://jpellegrino.com/teaching/epicconventions.html>
- Rafiq, M. (2023). *The Epic: Definition, Types and Characteristics*.
<https://owlcation.com/humanities/The-Epic-Definition-Types-Characteristics>
- Realubit, M. L. (2022). *Collecting and Colonizing Traditions: Localizing Humanities. The Bicol Dramatic Tradition*. Ateneo de Naga University Press.
- Retana, W. (1995). *Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino*. Wentworth Press.
- Reyes, J. C. (1992). *Bikol Maharlika* (pp. 47-48). JMC Press, Inc.
- Robredo, L. G. (2019). About Bicol Region, Philippines (2017). In *International Conference on the 450th Christianization, Hispanization and Urbanization of Luzon* (p. 16).
<http://www.islandsproperties.com/places/bicol.htm>
- Shuttleworth, M., & Wilson, L. T. (2008). *What Is a Paradigm?*
<https://explorable.com/what-is-a-paradigm>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. Discourse in Society. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin, & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Blackwell.
- Zhenzhao, N. (2019). Ethical Literary Criticism: Oral Literature and Brain Text. *Foreign Literature Studies*, 35, 8-15.