

REVITALIZING THE EXISTENT BUT FORGOTTEN BATAAN LITERARY LEGACY

Loida Lalas Garcia^{*1}, Lorna Roberts Roldan², Aymie Faye Galicia Jaring³,
Ceejay Ong Porgatorio⁴ and Jayvee David Perez⁴

¹*College of Education, Arts and Letters, Bataan Peninsula State University,
Bataan 2110, Philippines*

²*Department of Arts and Letters, Bataan Peninsula State University,
Bataan 2100, Philippines*

³*Department of Education, Bataan Learning Center Integrated School,
Bataan 2112, Philippines*

⁴*Department of Education, Saint Peter of Verona Academy,
Bataan 2111, Philippines*

**Corresponding author: llgalicia@bpsu.edu.ph*

Received: October 1, 2019; Revised: November 11, 2019;

Accepted: December 4, 2019

Abstract

The current paper is an initial attempt to revitalize the extant and available Bataan literature that for centuries have been kept but forgotten. The province of Bataan in the Philippines has borne the three-fold Spanish, American and Japanese conquests. It is interesting to explore how the Bataeños have manifested their character and identity through their writings. To date, no anthology on Bataan literature has been published, hence; this paper responds to an urgent need on reviving regional literature. In a wider perspective, the study of Bataan literature would disclose a racial context of the early and the present-day Bataeños. The previous collection of Bataan literature was completed in 1953 but has remained kept and uncirculated. They are found to be mostly folklores while the works of the 20th century homegrown writers have become mostly inaccessible until the present time. This study aims to resurface this literary legacy by employing its own retrieval process to recover the existing but elusive Bataan writings. Findings show that

the retrieved folklores existed even before the pre-colonial period and the early writers had bequeathed a literary heritage that merits restoration and a long-delayed gratitude towards these Bataeños who have mirrored a cultural peculiarity.

Keywords: Revitalizing; existent; forgotten; Bataan; literary legacy

Introduction

Studies on regional literature have been an open invitation initiated by literary experts globally. Local works, whether sourced from folklores or from the modern-day written forms, are sure to elicit interesting cultural details that are proven to be universal in nature. The innate tendencies of mankind to express their character as prompted by the present condition is best glimpsed through the texts. An individual is bound to be influenced by the institutional forces where they belong and thus either develops or destroys his sense of being. Anyone can choose to be either a passive respondent or a divergent who perseveres in order to make a great stimulus in a universal diverse community.

In the Philippines, the call to highlight and resurface the literary legacy of local writers has been an insistent plea that impelled the need to recognize and publish the writings of regional authors previously acknowledged but currently long buried in the past. Only a few advocates that these writings are part of a people's culture, a distinct manifestation of a character that distinguishes one race from the others. A literary piece is considered a treasure that speaks of a local character that illuminates life's reality in a certain period of time and still influences the perception of mankind. The province of Bataan is rich in literary legacy but dolefully being set aside which caused a seemingly nonchalant attitude even among literary enthusiasts.

In view of the stated circumstances which are likewise observed in other regions, prime research institutions in the country attempt to fuel a diminishing interest on literary studies. The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in collaboration with the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) campaigns for the worth of preserving arts and culture particularly in the literature discipline. The approved Harmonized National R and D Agenda (HNRDA) of the DOST-NRCP calls for *Filipinnovation* in literature under its Arts, History and Culture priority area. The stated urgencies have been included on their 2017-2019 priority areas and continued in 2020-2022 under the program of National Integrated Basic Research Agenda (NIBRA) 2017-2022.

Moreover, one of the mandates of the Commission on Higher Education Faculty Development Program (CHED-FDP) is to encourage faculty scholars to get involved into studies on regional writings. Decades prior to this, the province of Pampanga in which Bataan was once connected until 1754, has already acknowledged the insistent need for this hence, Kapampangan scholars came out with their books and anthologies on their local writings. Authors have come up with *Aurelio Tolentino Selected Writings* (1975), *Literature of the Pampangos* (1981), *Anthology of Kapampangan Literature* (1981) and *Kapampangan Writings* (1984). These writings have sparked further research leading to anthologies which at present have showcased the greatness and sentiments of early Kapampangan writers. The most recent study has been conducted by Lalas-Garcia in 2018 when she explored the sources and influences of the 20th century Kapampangan novels. She has uncovered varied cultural conditions that paved for the birth of novel writing in the province of Pampanga. Similarly, much can be brought out from the fictions of Bataan writers since the latter are inevitably influenced by the same colonial conditions borne not only in the Pampanga and Bataan regions, but the whole nation.

However, in comparison with Pampanga, the province of Bataan, woefully has not gone any further aside from complying with executive orders issued many years back which mandated the collection of a cultural legacy. Apparently, the collection has remained as it was, just an assortment of literature gathered from town to town and remained at the provincial library or elsewhere and with some private individuals, unpublished, therefore unnoticed. Until recently, very few attempts have been made to enrich the Bataan literature to circulate in the academe. What have been initiated have failed to reach a wider range of readers. The dismaying fact had it been rectified could have reached national to global circulations in order to reward Bataeño writers on their contribution.

The recovered collection which was mandated to the Department of Education (DepEd) from 1951 to 1953 however, is worth the scrutiny from literary enthusiasts. After about seven decades, the literary imprints of Bataan recorded as existent even during the pre-Spanish occupation, remain closeted on file. The distinction of the gathered folklores could have been highlighted

and preserved for the incoming generation in order to prompt gratitude on a legacy. The cultural manifestations of the early Bataños expressed on their oral literature deserves not only preservation but promotion as well. The province of Bataan has eleven municipalities: Dinalupihan, Hermosa, Orani, Samal, Abucay, Morong, Pilar, Orion, Limay, Mariveles, and Bagac. Each town has its own legends and tales diverse from each other, yet constitutes a single characteristic for all Bataños. This character could only be identified once their tales are told so as to expose their sentiments, their aspirations, their own personalities that could fare well with other regions, and could make an impact universally.

The attempt of honoring every town's folklores also provides recognition to teacher-researchers who were involved in the stated project. They have been enormously involved in salvaging what was left of the literary legacy that speaks of cultural identification of a particular society on a specific time period. Over the years, more oral and written literature may have been discovered but nothing compares to an interesting past yielded by a piece of legend, a song, a riddle, a proverb, a verse, or a tale and any other similar heritage that could only exist in a group of people bound by their own philosophy.

In contrast with other region's advanced studies on their local authors, especially during the 20th century, Bataan scholars have provided lukewarm interest among homegrown writers. This could be attributed to the fact that the provincial libraries do not possess any full copies of texts authored by Bataños regarded as prominent by literary critics. Fortunately, the worth of these early writers has been redeemed by some prestigious online and digital libraries worldwide. They specifically shed light on the legacy of three of the most distinguished women of Bataan popularly known as the *Tatlong Marias/* Three Marias. The 1953 collection of the cultural life in the province has mentioned the craftsmanship of three multi-awarded literary figures in the persons of Rosalia Aguinaldo, from Orion, Bataan, Hilaria Labog from Samal and Nieves Baens-Del Rosario of Orani as most renowned based on their writing skills. However, teacher-researchers never disclosed any information on the works of the stated women novelists cum short story tellers.

Opportunely, the novels of Rosalia L. Aguinaldo originally published in 1922 and 1933 are circulated online by the University of Michigan and the Haiti Trust Digital Libraries. Aguinaldo's novels include *Mutyang Itinapon/ Forsaken Maiden* (1922), composed of 117 pages and *Higanti ng Pagibig/Love Vengeance* (1933) which runs to 161 pages. Locally, Aguinaldo's almost indistinguishable photocopied Tagalog novel in 1922 titled *Tanikala ng Pagtitiis/Chain of Misery* needs to be restored. The author is yet to be merited on her seemingly more popular works like *Ay!, Ay!! Oh!, Oh!*, and *Ang Babaing Mahiwaga/The Mysterious Lady*.

Aguinaldo is a representation of the 'mysterious lady' in her novel because as of this writing, not much can be gathered about her personal life. Titles of her works are recorded but remain inaccessible. She is often described as one of the prime novelists of her time and a renowned story teller in weekly magazines, hence it is really ill-fitting that her full works are not readily retrieved. Her death is still unidentified and the researchers are still in the process of gathering documents pertaining to this. It is presumed that by the present time, Aguinaldo's works belong to the public domain but her heirs and exact death anniversary need to be discovered.

Meanwhile, Hilaria Labog, Aguinaldo's contemporary, has been equally credited as one of the most notable novelists in the early 20th century. The recently conducted data gathering process has unearthed her volumes of work comprising novels and short stories which are kept by leading universities in the country, but dismayingly not accessible in full copies. Interestingly, Taylan, back in 2002 conducted a study on the feminist lenses of Labog's eight short stories published regularly in weekly magazines until the first five decades of the 20th century. The same author conducted another study on Labog in 2006 that highlight the four decades of the latter's writings but no other follow-up studies have ensued. Inevitably, Labog's literary contribution has remained in the backseat.

The hapless stated fact has long been taken for granted even by the academic community which is totally uncalled for given the author's literary merits. Labog has been a prized novelist and an unwavering short story writer during the first five decades of the 20th century. Searches online, would disclose her artistry as a prime writer of her time. A single web search about

the author reveals her extensive manuscripts held by about three to five libraries worldwide. These include her first prize winner *Nadaya!/Cheated*, a novelette published in 1947. Also included are *Sa Landas ng Kaligayahan/The Path to Happiness*, novelette (1945); *Ulilang kalapati/Bereaved Dove*, novel (1947); *Kaluluwang Dakila/ Great Soul*, novel; and her *Ang Suliranin ng Kanyang Pag-ibig/Her Love Problems*, novel (1947). Along with these are numerous short stories and serial novels that are recorded on magazine issues until her death in 1962. It is only through the conduct of supplemental studies that more of Labog's works be elicited.

The third mentioned 'Maria' who has manifested her writing prowess is Nieves Baens-del Rosario whose primary novel *Erlinda ng Bataan/ Erlinda of Bataan* has brought her global literary distinction. Her novel published in 1970 has been held in digital copies by about sixteen libraries worldwide. The novel, set during the horrendous conquest of the Japanese in the Philippines ignited an instant empathy with readers. The character of Erlinda has recreated the helpless Filipina ruthlessly gang-raped to death and abandoned by Japanese soldiers during the onslaught of World War II. The slogan 'Remember Erlinda!' has been the unifying force that forged the camaraderie between the US and Filipino combatants against the much superior Japanese forces.

It is recorded that Nieves Baens-del Rosario who lived from 1902 until 1986 published her first essay in 1922. Her multi-themed texts have inspired readers to regard her as a major writer of her time. She came up with about 200 short stories and poems in Filipino aside from her works of translation during the 1930s and the 1940s. Baens-del Rosario was granted a prestigious grant by the Commonwealth Literary Award in 1940 for her short stories, also an Award of Merit in 1950 for her Filipino poetry and another Award of Merit for her outstanding essay *Si Valeriano Hernandez Pena at ang Kanyang Nena at Neneng*. The stated essay has likewise been made available online by three libraries worldwide. Needless to say, the present generation primarily in Bataan would greatly benefit from the works of Baens-del Rosario if only these were made available and circulated.

The literary landscape of Bataan is not only made significant by the aforementioned three lady writers but likewise by equally prominent male

authors. One of them is Lazaro Francisco, a native of Orani, who was posthumously awarded the National Artist for Literature in 2009 due to his involvement as a writer. Francisco's outstanding legacy in literature has been re-introduced by the National Commission on Cultural Arts (NCCA) body as it re-published the author's short story *Ang Beterano/The Veteran* (Francisco, 2017), originally printed in 1931. The texts reflect the ideology of his time, the character of his people, and the dominant society where he belonged. It is truly a piece of literary legacy that needs to be considered in the study of Philippine literature.

Further, Lazaro Francisco is likewise well-remembered for his novels *Sugat ng Alaala/Scrapes of the Past*, *Maganda pa ang Daigdig/The World is Still Beautiful*, *Daluyong/Surge*, and *Ilaw sa Hilaga/Northern Light*. Sadly, the stated novels, though available at some leading universities in the country, are totally unknown in the classroom. Apparently, even literature teachers are either unaware of their existence or prefer to be indifferent about the distinctive works that led to their closeted significance; buried with the author on his grave.

Another Bataño writer distinguished for his literary heritage is the former governor and congressman of the province, Maximino Delos Reyes of Balanga, Bataan. His popularity as a writer during the first decade of the 20th century paved way for his successful political career. Delos Reyes's political charisma to his constituents could be attributed to his patriotic sentiments embodied in his zarzuela plays *Pawis ng Dukha/Torment of the Needy* and *Dahas ng Pilak/Violence of Silver*. Having endured the three-century rule of Spain and the present US occupation, the Bataños could readily sympathize with the characters and situations that the author employed. Readers are all too-familiar with the current scenarios of the plays and the young man behind the scripts proves to be a playwright-political leader. Delos Reyes also wrote mutinous columns for the *La Solidaridad*, a newspaper openly critical of the foreign invasion. Provincial accounts state that in 1910, Delos Reyes was arrested for writing *Huling Habin/Last Will*, considered by the US as a seditious article. Undaunted by political harassment, the author asserted his right as a journalist and local records show that at age 21, Delos Reyes was heralded as one of the ten greatest writers in the country.

Delos Reyes was elected as Governor in 1912 and after his term in 1916 he ran for congress which he easily won and served for two consecutive terms until 1922. He passed away in 1923 when he was only 36 years old. His contribution to the province is so extensive that in 1957, one of the elementary schools in the city of Balanga, Bataan was named after him. His biography flaunts his expertise as a famed writer of his time. Seemingly, Delos Reyes has at least two extant novels and more available works that need to be recovered for appreciation and scrutiny.

Finally, another distinguished homegrown author is Eulogio B. Rodriguez from Orani, Bataan. Rodriguez is best reminisced as one that belonged to the most-esteemed scholars and national librarians in the country. Regarded as an intellectual elite, he belonged to the first-generation graduates of the University of the Philippines apart from having the privilege of getting his master's degree from the University of Wisconsin as a US *pensionado*. His distinction though can still be stretched by his literary endowments. He is a prolific historian, a man of letters, and a Bataño gifted with the skill of the literary arts. He is typically credited in his home province regarding his effort to complete the first 'History of Bataan' previously initiated by Maximino Delos Reyes. Rodriguez's premature death in 1948 had dwarfed what could have been a great contribution not only to the country, but mostly to his hometown.

Online searches offer a few of Rodriguez's works; *The Adarna Bird* (1933): a Filipino tale of pre-Spanish origin which has three editions and held by 17 WorldCat member libraries worldwide; *Francisco Baltazar: our national poet*, two editions published in 1939, held by 16 WorldCat member libraries; *Santo Tomas University's contributions to Philippine culture: Science in the Philippines in the pre-American era* by Eulogio B Rodriguez, published in 1935; *The legend of the Sampaguita: the Filipino national flower*, published in 1930 in English and held by a WorldCat member library worldwide; *Some facts about libraries in the Philippines particularly the National Library* published in 1933 and the *Philippine history bulletin*. More of Rodriguez's texts, especially his personal journals about the fate and condition of the Filipino nation, are archived at leading libraries in the country. Being a former national librarian, Rodriguez is documented as a nationalist

poet, an essayist, a historian, among others, whose volumes of works have yet to be published. It is aimed that this shall be remedied so as to honor his literary craft.

Wrapping up, Bataan in reality and if explored, is rich in literary legacy comprised of varied literatures that could have been introduced earlier on. It would serve a huge impact to the province if these texts would not only resurface but be published in order for the present learners to appreciate and learn from the interesting past, present and future of the province. All this could be exhibited by the works which had been collected by each town since 1951 but were never published thereafter, so they had become fleeting memories almost forgotten even in the academe. It is mandatory that in the present time, this literary legacy be retrieved and documented for publication. The public, especially the academic field, should be re-oriented on the existence of this bulk of literature officially gathered more than half a decade ago.

In conclusion, revitalizing Bataan literary legacy is a necessity especially in the academe. The modern learners opt to find their roots where they have come from, where they could establish a connection with their past. They are expected to reconnect with the historic and significant past manifested by the early writers through their works. The home-grown writers knew better about the local needs of the community. Their knowledge transposed in their writings serve as a point of reference for the present generation to embrace or dispel. History is always tied with literature and vice-versa. It is undeniable that a literary legacy is worth valuing for they attest to the distinctness of a particular race.

It is unfortunate that the present learners seldom remember their local authors with their works who in some ways could be at par with their renowned counterparts in other regions. The world masterpieces talk about the universal influence of Greek literature, French, German, Anglo-American, British, African and other European literature which seldom merit Asian literature that may include a cultural diversity found in the regional literature of the country. Bataan literature, when explored, may showcase a sundry of literary art that is worth the learning hours spent in the classroom. Ultimately, the thoughts and values manifested in Bataan literature may bring together a united race fully appreciative of their own individuality.

Methodology

Research Framework/Methodology

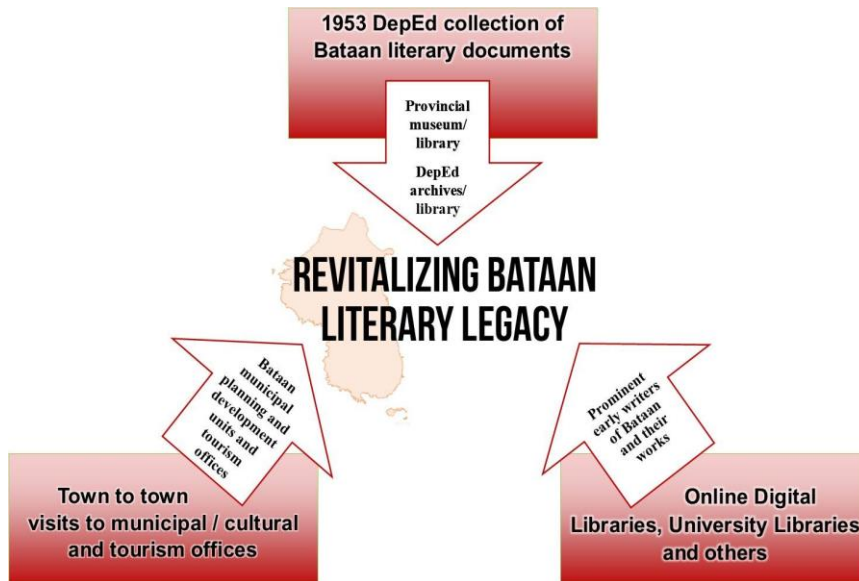


Figure 1: Process Used to Revitalize Bataan Literature

Figure 1 presents the process of revitalizing Bataan literature. The 1951-1953 collection that was conducted in compliance with Executive Order 486 (2007) has been kept but closeted at the provincial library which was later scanned by the Department of Education (DepEd) library. At present, this is what is immediately needed on the contextualization of literature and the DepEd shows enthusiasm on the inclusion of this in the curriculum. The veracity of the gathered files was confirmed through a town to town visit to each municipal planning and development council and tourism units of each town. Officers in charge have expressed their approval on the documents pertaining to the town and compared them on their archives. The collection mostly composed of folklores in the form of legends, myths, riddles, proverbs, poems, and cultural mores and folktales. Each town had its own legend passed on from one generation to the next. Each tale differs from each town but some resemblances are likewise observed. This data serves to rejuvenate the literary heritage bequeathed even during the pre-colonial period

Further, the stated initial retrieval process mentions the names of prominent authors with special reference to the ‘three Marias’ of Bataan, the three homegrown lady writers consists of Aguinaldo, Labog, and Baens-del Rosario. It turns out though that there are no insertions on the full or partial fictions of the writers. In the same manner, the project also states male authors who are considered as prominent writers of their time, but again none of their full works are included. It is through library works that these writers’ manuscripts are discovered. The national library and local prestigious university libraries have disclosed the outstanding works of early Bataan authors that would lead on revitalizing the literary legacy of Bataan.

Result and Discussion

Westwood (2013) defines Literature as the recording of the human experience, an exploration into the human heart and soul. Thus, it evokes feelings and thoughts from its readers who enter into true communication with the literary work. It is an undisputed fact that literature instills interest on divergent cultures and ideologies that set one nation apart from others. The literary legacy passed down from generation bequeathed by early writers should be rediscovered at least to identify the textual distinctive. It is essential that the present generation be linked with what the local writers have been trying to express through the centuries. Equally, it is mandatory that literary texts be focused on the natural setting that could be gleaned from the works of early writers whose messages have been long ignored. The retrieval and documentation of this local literature will somehow fill the huge gap on the studies of Bataan literature.

DepEd Collection of Bataan literature (1951-1953)

The 1953 collection of Bataan literature was done in compliance with the Executive Order No. 486 (2007), s. 1951 and signed on December 7, 1951 by President Elpidio Quirino. The task was mandated to the Division Superintendent of Schools in which aside from the historic events, it was specified that each barrio/town’s traditions, legends folk tales, beliefs, proverbs, sayings, superstitions, puzzles, songs, nursery rhymes, etc. should

be included. The Order states that it is preferable that these be written in the language or dialect of the locality and that the vernacular version be accompanied with a translation in English. Further, President Quirino required that the names of all Filipino authors of any community and the titles of all their productions, whether printed or in manuscript, should be included. If the productions are in manuscript form, a statement should be given of the names of the persons in possession of the same. Select supervisors and teachers promptly took actions as the directed manuscripts should be completed and submitted as soon as possible, but not later than July 4, 1953. On the Preface of the compiled materials, Mr. Victor M. De Leon, the acting Division Superintendent has announced the completion of the collection on June 30, 1953.

It is notable that the school principals, supervisors and teachers directly involved in the project have only focused on what was written. They centered on traditions, legends, folk tales, beliefs, proverbs, sayings, superstitions, puzzles, songs, nursery rhymes, but the 'etc.' in the order was not given attention if not totally ignored. This could refer to short stories, zarzuelas, novels, moralistic writings, journals, plays, and other literary genres that have been available during that time. The collection refers to well-known local novelists and short story writers but did not include even a few 'teasers' on their works. The collection could have served its purpose; for the consumption of the future generation as well as sources of materials for researchers. It is of no wonder that these local fictionists failed to capture the interest of the local reading public.

The collected literary texts from the 1953 collection has been organized alphabetically by town starting from Abucay, Bagac, Balanga (not converted into a city yet), Dinalupihan, Hermosa, Limay, Mariveles, Morong, Orani, Orion, Pilar, and Samal. The original texts were collected in their Tagalog language then translated to English as mandated by the executive order.

Abucay literature. Abucay's legends consists of its own, also the *Legend of the Mango*, the *Dumero*, the *Turtle*, *St. Dominic's Dog*, *The Witch and the Method of Treatment* and *Capitangan*. The town is also rich in popular songs; among which that were gathered are the *Awit ng Bilanggo*, *Biak-na-*

Bato (Kanta ng mga Insurektos), *Ang Batsilyer at Bangkero*, *Tindera ng Hapon*, *Santo Nino sa Pandakan*, *O Kaka, O Kaka*, *Bahay Kubo*, *Paru-parong Bukid*, *Leron Leron Sinta*, *Ale, Ale*. It is notable that most of the songs are also claimed by other regions like Pampanga to which Abucay was once connected also by the Tagalog-speaking regions. The veracity of the record still needs to be examined. On their puzzles and riddles considered as food for the intellect, Abucay records about 136 and their proverbs more than exceed that number. Its folktales comprise of stories titled *The Tiyanak*, *Daniel na Baka*, *Kapre*, *Duende*, and *Undong Tubig*. Collected also on the town of Abucay are their folkways which include stories on *Ang Palalong Banal* (The Proud Saint), *Ang Taong Naengkanto* (The Bewitched), *Si Juan Tutoo at si Juan Sinungaling* (Juan, the Truthful and Juan, the Liar), and the *Ang Alwagi ni Haring Solomon* (The Carpenter of King Solomon).

Bagac literature. Bagac writings begin with their lullabies or cradle songs, entitled in the same manner. This likewise includes *Boat or River Man's Song*, *Kundiman*, *Kumintang* or *War Song*, and *Song of Thrift*. Their legend only includes the *Origin of the World*. Not as rich as the Abucay literature, Bagac also has its indigenous puzzles, riddles, proverbs and sayings.

Balanga literature. Aside from their myths, superstitious beliefs, puzzles, riddles, sayings and proverbs, Balanga, the present capital town of Bataan, has its own legend on *Kung Bakit Lumilindol*, *the Origin of Cabog-Cabog*, and the *Legend of Cupang*. Their popular songs include *Guding*, *Guding*, *Ale, Ale*, *Namamangka*, *Ali, Ali, Ali*, *Bahay na Bato*, *Apat na Pulubi*, *O Kaka, O Kaka*, *Halina, Halina*, *Namamangka sa Dalawang Ilog*, *Ang Huni ng Tuko*, *Punong Granada*, *Ayokung-Ayoko*, *Santa Clara* and *Kapirasong Tabla*. Some of the original Balanga songs are categorized as love songs; *Tamis ng Pagibig* and *Pahiwatig*, also nationalistic songs; *Ang Bayan Kong Hirang*, *Awit sa Pamamangka*, *Awit na Patula* and *Binibigkas ng Sugatan*. Researchers also recorded *Dalit ng Bata sa Pagbabago ng Panahon*, *Awit sa Puwing*, *Nagmamaktol* and *Pagtalon*.

It is noteworthy that in 1951-1953, the researchers admitted that there were no available literary texts authored by Maximino Delos Reyes, the former provincial governor. They acknowledged though that Delos Reyes was for some time engaged in writing verses and articles in Spanish and Tagalog.

Further, researchers had mentioned that Jose Tuazon, the famous song composer and well-known for his own version of *Magtanim ay Di Biro*, has also written and directed a play entitled *Dahas ng Salapi*. Its copy is yet to be recovered.

Dinalupihan literature. There was a very scarce literary collection among the Dinalupihēños or, probably because of their close proximity to the Pampanga province. It is probable that some writings have been identified to Kapampangan writers and have not been recovered. The 1953 collection only include the *Legend of Saging*, and the *Birth of Barrio San Jose*. The *Legend of Malasimbo*, believed to be the myth about the town, is found from the historical committee of Orani. The insufficiency of literary materials continues in the present time since there are no updated records kept by the Tourism Office and the Municipal Planning Development Council. The book *Kasaysayan ng Dinalupihan/Dinalupihan History* did not bear any of the literary legacy of local authors except for the latest *Dinalupihan Hymn* composed by Bernadette Gutierrez.

Hermosa literature. The collected writings in this town include the tales about *Apo Iro*, *the Miraculous*, *the Legend of Balsik*, about *San Pedro the Martyr* and the *Origin of the Palay*. Their songs include *O Cacang Doncellia*, and *Ing Mana Cung Singing*. They also have very few puzzles and riddles, proverbs and sayings. Hermosa's recorded folktale is limited only to a very short story of *The Rice Bird* which is as follows: There once lived an old couple who were farmers. They had only one daughter. One afternoon, while the old woman was cleaning rice to cook for supper, her child came to her and asked, 'Please mother, give me some rice.' 'No child', the mother said, 'Rice is not good to eat before it is cooked. Wait until supper is ready.' After cleaning the rice, the mother puts inside a deep square basket. She covered the rice and left the house to fetch some water. As soon as her mother left, the daughter came near the basket to take some rice. While she was trying to reach the rice with her hand, she slipped and fell through the covering that was on top of the basket into its bottom. After she fell, the cover resumed its normal position. When the old woman came back, she heard a bird chirping. The sound came from within the basket. When she took out the basket's cover, out hopped a brown rice bird. As it flew away, it called back, 'Goodbye mother, goodbye.'

Limay/Lamao literature. The town has its own legend *The Origin of Limay* aside from *The Legend of Buaya Creek* and the *Legend of Kawayang Kiling*. Limay's songs comprise of the single-stanza *Neneng*, *Sintang Palpatok*, *Puso* and *Dalagang Naligo*. There are also very limited accounts on their puzzles and riddles. The concerned town officials, however aim to enrich their present files.

Mariveles literature. There are sufficient recorded sayings and proverbs, puzzles and riddles at the Mariveles town. Their songs had their own intent, like when a young girl or boy acted against the social standards of those days, people will sing accordingly. Also, when a child wanted good food; when a young man is courting a young lady but still too young for the responsibilities of marriage, the young girl's parents have a specific song for such. The town bears the legend of *How Cabcaben Got its Name*, the *Origin of the World*, the *Earthquake*, also the origin of the *Lightning and Thunder*. Their songs are titled *Sa Silong ng Langit*, *Oh, Ilaw*, and *Ako'y babalik*.

Morong literature. Not much was gathered on the writings of Morong. The account was mostly on their historic events and folkways. Only a few folktales were recorded as follows: *Nahuli sa Misa*, and *Ang Asong Nagkaanak ng Tao*.

Orani literature. Aside from its historic past, Orani has been accounted having varied legends, to wit, *Origin of the Rainbow*, *Origin of the Sea*, *Origin of the World*, *Origin of the Land*, *Origin of the Seas*, *Origin of Plants*, *Origin of Man*, *Origin of Woman*, *Origin of the River*, and the *Origin of Rain*. The folksongs attributed to the Orani people compose of *Leron*, *Leron Sinta*, *Halika na Neneng*, *Ako'y Ibigin Mo*, *Santo Ninyo sa Pandakan*, *Topo*, *Topo*, *Bariga*, *Matulog na Bunso*, *Aling Purangki*, *Ako'y Naglalakad*, *Huwag Ka Nang Maglambing*, and *Huwag Ka Lamang Maglambing*. Orani is also abundant on their puzzles and riddles, proverbs and sayings.

Researchers have acknowledged the notable literary contribution of Felisa Baens, the *ABAKADA ng Bataan*. They have also listed some of the works of Nieves Baens Del Rosario: *Nuestra Senora del Rosario ng Bataan*, *Erlinda ng Bataan*, *Busilak*, *Marysol*, *Ang Pintuang Bukas*, *Mga Kamay na Maliliit ang Umaakay*, *Alamat ng Orani* and *Sarili na Natin ang Daigdig*.

In 2017, the Orani Historical Committee has launched its updated book of their historical and cultural heritage. The project was headed by the late former President of the Bataan Peninsula State University. Sadly, Dr. Magpantay, on his untimely death, was unable to extend further his pet project for his hometown. Among the literary pieces included in the book are *The Man and the Ghost* (folktale), *The origin of the Patron Saint of Orani* (legend), *The Origin of the Firefly* (legend), *The Love of Mt. Natib* (folktale), *The Invasion of the Moros* (legend), *Ang Mangingisda* (short story), *Bataan* (poem), *The Origin of Orani* (legend), *Mount Malasimbo* (legend), *The Bleeding Fingers of the Virgin* (legend), *How Litson (roast pig) Came Into Being* (myth). It is notable that two of the most prominent Bataan writers are natives of Orani: Nieves Baens-del Rosario and Eulogio B. Rodriguez.

Orion literature. The people of Udyong or Orion rave on their myth on how their town got its name and aside from it, there is not much that was recorded about their writings. They have, however, 34 folksongs which consist of *Dahong Tangan-tangan*, *Buwan, Buwan*, *Sisilang*, *Sitsiritsit Alibangbang*, *Kapirasong Luya*, *Dalawaang Loob*, *Ibong Batu-bato*, *Santa Catalina*, *Ako’y Bubuyog*, *Ako’y si Baluyot*, *Mariang Puputi-puti*, *Si Giniray-giray*, *Nasaan si Karingki?*, *Butiting Laot*, *Ito Palang Bundok*, *Mataas na Langit*, *Aling Charing Ikakasal*, *Halina Neneng*, *Ale-aleng Namamangka*, *Abay Ibong*, *Ang Bibingka kong Lutuin*, *Ako’y si Palaka*, *Lalaking Matapang*, *Maria*, *Maglaba Ka*, *Mataas na Langit*, *Sino ang Namatay?*, *Bitibiti Kung Biti*, *Sta. Mariang Picadore*, *Pinpin Di Sarapin*, *Pahiram*, *Pahiram*, *Ang Neneng Ko*, *Mang teban*, *Maligo sa Pandam*, *Kaysarap ng Mayroong Pera*, and finally, *Buyabo ng Buyabo*. Their puzzles and riddles, sayings and proverbs are comparable with other towns that enrich this brain-stimulating creativity.

Pilar literature. The town of Pilar thrives with its own legends, songs, myths and beliefs, puzzles and riddles, sayings and proverbs. Among its legends are *The Legend of Pilar*, *Legend of Tabakohan*, *Legend of Bayaran*, *Legend of Gasili*, *Legend of Aningay*, the *Legend of the Gabi Leaf* and the *Legend of Balut*. Its single-stanza folksongs comprise of *Ale-aleng Namamangka*, *Ako ay Nagtanim*, *Doon Po sa Amin*, *Noong Unang Panahon*, *Punong Granada*, *Tiririt*, *Tindera ng Hipon*, *Pumpong Gasili*, *Puweng*, *Matandang Uwak*, *Halina*, *Halina*, *Umpo sa Hulo*, *Ang Magsasaing*, *Ang*

Mananahi, Ako'y Ibigin Mo, Tayo'y Magaliw, Ang Mabuhay sa Ligaya, and lastly, *Paghahandog*.

Samal literature. The townspeople of Samal used to be very familiar with their recorded legends like the *Legend of their Patron Saint Sta. Catalina*. They also have the *Legend of Tiwala*. Seemingly, there was a very limited available materials in the past but upon town visit, researchers were informed that some of their documents are still being organized and the Municipal Planning Development Council is preparing their own encyclopedia.

Digital Access Worldwide, National and University Libraries

The succeeding introduces Bataan home-grown authors and their partially extant fictions that the researchers have gathered for initial references. The files are not included in the collection of literary materials gathered from the towns and barrios of the province. Data are obtained from online digital libraries worldwide and from the library archives sections of prestigious universities; the National Library as well as publications that aimed to study the early local writers of Bataan. For an initial study, this paper focuses on the 'three Marias' of Bataan or the three great women writers whose volumes of works are accorded merits by literary critics. Further, from the study conducted, it is found that there is a vital need to recognize these remarkable women whose works at one point have gained limited prestige but failed to reach their hometown.

ROSALIA AGUINALDO (1892-1962)

Not much can be retrieved on the biography of Rosalia Aguinaldo. She is often introduced as a writer from Orion and the author of 'Ay! 'Ay!' but any personal life that is scarce is augmented by proofs of her prominence as a great writer of her time. She is one of few women writers that was included in the anthology of brilliant storytellers that was edited by the illustrious literary critic Inigo Ed Regalado. It was recorded that her story 'Ay, Ay' won the first place award as the Story of the Year. This was in the early 30s when the literary landscape was dominated by male writers. Moreover, in 1922, Precioso Palma, a literary critic and publisher has compared the prowess of Aguinaldo with that of the best-selling novelists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Palma has

particularly equated Aguinaldo with the Spanish fictionist, Carlota Braeme and with the renowned Italian novelist Carolina Invernizio. From a male perspective, Aguinaldo's works are akin with highly distinguished novels of her time.

Aguinaldo's novels *Higanti ng Pagibig* comprised of 161 pages is digitized and made available online by the University of Michigan Library and the Haiti Trust Digital Library. It was originally published in 1933. Her 117-page *Mutyang itinapon* initially circulated as early as in 1922 is likewise digitized and published by the University of Michigan Library. Another of her novel *Tanikala ng Pagitiis* has been published in 1922 and this has earned her the respect of her male counterparts. The full copies of these novels are yet to be compiled.

Libingan/Grave

Aguinaldo's "Libingan" is a poem comparing life and death. It is included in the Anthology on select poetry and short stories of great women writers from the first decades of the century gathered by the renowned Soledad Reyes. It talks about the struggles of living on Earth and the peace and harmony that we may experience in death. The sorrow of life is the tranquility and concord of death. The war of the living is the harmony beyond their present existence. The verses illuminate the reality of what life and death offer. Both are equally acceptable. Remarkable stories of Rosalia Aguinaldo were available but not readily accessible like her *Ay! Ay!*, *Higanti ng Pag-ibig*, *Ang Babaing Mahiwaga*.

HILARIA LABOG (1890-1962)

Hilaria Labog, a native of Lalawigan, Samal, Bataan who was born on January 14, 1890 is famed as one of the most popular women story tellers of her time. She was ranked in greatness with her contemporary male prolific writers such as Salvador Lopez, Rafael Zulueta dela Costa and Manuel Arguilla. Labog started writing literary short stories and novels for *Liwayway*, *Bulaklak*, *Silahis*, *Ilang-ilang*, *Alitaptap* and many other national magazines and comics. Many of her novels have been adapted for Tagalog movies,

namely *Lihim ng Lumang Simbahan*, *Tinangay ng Apoy*, *Bagong Sinderela*, *Damit Pangkasal*, *Ulirang Kalapati*, and *Bulaklak na Walang Pangalan*.

Labog had won the Commonwealth Literary Contest in 1940. She was also awarded by the Liwayway Literary Award for her novel *Sa Lumang Kumbento*. She was also chosen to judge the best short stories of 1954-1955 along with the literary experts in the likes of Inigo Ed Regalado and Gregorio Garcia. Labog has written 75 short stories from 1920-1950 aside from her well-known novels. The Internet discloses some of her extant novels which are *Naglahong liwanag*, *Kaluluwang Dakila*, *Nadaya!*, *Ang Suliranin ng Kanyang Pagibig*, *Sa Landas ng Kaligayahan* and *Ulirang Kalapati*. It is mandatory that her works be retrieved in full to introduce her to the present reading audience.

In addition, the succeeding works of Labog are found available in some prestigious libraries but need to be retrieved in full for each specific genre to be identified: *Kasal na walang Pag-ibig*, *Dakilang Ina*, *Nag icay a liwanag*, *Inang Hamili*, *Maikling Kwento*, *Panauhin sa Hating Gabi*, *Anak ng Gobernador*, *Natacneng a Cararua*, *Matinik na bulaklak*, *Salamin ng Buhay*, *Bumagsak na Dambana*, *Walang Maliw*, *Ang Luma kong Payong*.

Nadaya/Cheated

Initial investigation points out to this novelette of Labog as a 1940 Commonwealth awards recipient. The typical love story is made extraordinary by its portrayal of the ghastly Japanese cruelty, the heartless betrayal of the ‘Makapili’ Filipinos against their own people, and the resentful Americans. The setting is during the post-Japanese occupation which has become interesting because of its vivid description on the ugly ravages of war, not only physically, but more on the permanent scars that it caused among the characters.

The story revolves around Ester, a twenty-year old war survivor, her new husband, Ricardo, and Armando, the former suitor and family friend of Ester. Concealments slowly unfolded on the course of the narrative; Ester and Ricardo both kept a secret on their real identities and Armando, presumed to have been killed as a Japanese prisoner came back to fulfill his promise to Ester’s late father. Armando, a true gentleman could not disclose the truth to

Ester knowing that it would hurt her terribly. The inevitable occurred; Eduardo, a.k.a Ricardo is the man behind Ester's father and brothers' death; her husband is later arrested by the American soldiers and the poor good-hearted woman could only cry in anguish 'I was cheated'.

NIEVES BAENS DEL ROSARIO (1902-1986)

An acclaimed daughter of Orani, Bataan, Del Rosario is a prominent personality not only in her province but to the country. A consistent class topper, Del Rosario is recorded as the author of 240 short stories and poems in Filipino. She is also a translator and a novelist who is a recipient of literary awards. She was merited the Commonwealth Literary Award in 1940 for her short stories; an Award of Merit from the 'Surian ng Wikang Pambansa' for her outstanding essay; and another Award of Merit in 1950 for her Tagalog poems that was accorded by the National Federation of Women's Club. Del Rosario's novels include: *Bulaklak ng Camia*, *Nagbabalik na Luwalhati*, *Ngayon at Bukas*, *Sumbat ng Budhi*, *Sundan Mo Ako*, *Balimbing*, and *Susi ng Patawad*.

Del Rosario's name is highly revered in her birth town. Only her select works occupy the pages of the literary works in the historical book published by the Orani municipality. This includes her short stories *Ang Aming Kasal* (1946), *Na Kay Neneng Ligaya* (1946) and the Preface on her legendary novel *Erlinda ng Bataan* (1970).

***Erlinda ng Bataan*/Erlinda of Bataan**

The whole novel is available at leading libraries and universities in the country but for copyright reasons, the researchers could only take some glimpses at the novel. Its digitized copy is also available online through the WorldCat Digital Library and at the National Library of Australia.

"REMEMBER ERLINDA" is commonly known as the slogan used by the US Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) at the height of intense fighting in Bataan during World War II. Yelling REMEMBER ERLINDA provokes combatants to fuel their strength and resist the cruelty of the Japanese forces. Erlinda represents the suppressed motherland who incessantly suffers

from cruel invaders. War-withered, ruthlessly beaten and starved, fighters endured all as they remember 'Erlinda'.

The identity of the girl 'Erlinda' has been pinpointed to a Bataan lass brutally raped by Japanese soldiers and then killed. From the historical accounts of war veteran Lt. Col. Fidel L. Ongpauco on his book "*They Refused to Die*", he accounts that two USAFFE officers, Major Dionisio Ojeda and Captain Castillo, found the lifeless body of a young woman, about 16 years old, lying along the bank of a river in Pilar in January 1942. She was naked and bloody all over. Near the body, they found a photograph of a woman with the dedication: *With love forever... to my dearest darling, Erlinda.*"

In the 1970 Del Rosario's novel, she resurrected the character of *Erlinda*. Del Rosario, wholly familiar of her hometown has revived the patriotism associated with the world war battle cry. The author has relived Bataan's scenario in 1942-1945 and successfully incited the memory of folks who fought for Erlinda. In the novel, Erlinda's family died due to the time bomb brought by the Japanese troops and only she and her siblings, Cora and Ed eventually survived. The horror of the Japanese occupation had wrecked the lives of many and led them to hopelessness. In times that the Filipino troops were prone to retreat due to lack of weapons and food, Erlinda, who belonged to the freedom fighters resolved not to give up. She fought until her last breath.

Ang Mangingisda/ The Fisher

Del Rosario's short story, *Ang Mangingisda (The Fisher)* was anthologized in *50 Kuwentong Ginto ng 50 Batikang Kuwentista (50 Golden Stories by 50 Great Storytellers)*, edited by Pedrito Reyes in 1939. Its local color is found everywhere in the story; the Abukay church, the barangay Kalagiman, the fisher folks, the typical neighbors, the transportation during the early times and mostly the values of the Bataños. The setting encompasses the actual conditions of the time and the commendable values that the present readers need to ponder.

The story tells the misfortune that befell on the newly-married couple Luisa and Sencio. The fisher Sencio was believed to have drowned on a stormy night that caused incomparable grief to Luisa whose baby will never see her father. It turns out after fifteen years that the husband had survived and

struggled to get back to his wife and daughter. Too late, Luisa is comfortably married with an equally good man Pitong. The archetypal representations of a commendable society are manifested; faithful and longsuffering wife, a loving husband, the obedient daughter, the reliable neighbors, a peaceful community and the use of language exclusive for the early local folks. However, there is more to be gleaned in the short story once applied with appropriate literary approaches and this can only be achieved when this story is circulated.

Siya ang Iuwi mo sa Akin/ Bring her Home to Me

This short story of Baens-del Rosario appears on the anthology of women writers as gathered by Soledad Reyes in 2003. The plot depicts the maternal instincts proven to be reliable in making tough decisions. The fiction focuses on Conchita who counsels his son Ernesto to invite for lunch his four women friends whom he himself fancies. The apt choice is entrusted to the mother who has a keen eye not only on outside appearance but the inner character of a suitable wife. Three of the ladies named Esperanza, Dolores and Rosy accepted the invitation but Lucila sends a letter of decline. It turns out later that Aling Conchita secretly pries on Lucila's admirable personality and informed Ernesto that it is best to woo and win the girl's heart. The mother chooses Lucila that prompts Ernesto to bring home to her.

Online library searches disclose that the following works of N.B. Del Rosario are available at some university libraries which include: *Bulaklak ng Kamyra*, *Pasanin mo ang Krus na pang araw- araw*, *Ang Kasintahan ng Ating Bayani*, *Ang Lider ng Manggagawa*, *Nasaan ang Kahapon*, *Iba't ibang Maikling Kuwento*, *Ang Patawad ng Patay*, *May Ning-ning pa*, *Ngayon at Bukas*, *Ang susi ng Patawad at ibang Dula*, *Nang sumikat ang araw*, *Ang Aking Pinsan at iba pang Maikling kwento*, *Umulan o Umaraw*, *Busilak: Dugtungang Kwento kasama si Hilaria Labog*, *Balimbing*, *Sumbat ng Budhi* and *Kuwintas ng Pasakit*.

Again, as what is observed with other works, the stated fictions are yet to be retrieved in full for further analysis. The constant library visits are not enough to read and examine the works. It is a comfort however that there are numerous Bataan writings that need prompt attention to unfold their heritage.

Conclusion

The initial attempt of revitalizing Bataan literature in the present study has been very limited, hence it ought to be a continuous process until all required resources are compiled. So much needs to be revived and more have to be streamed to the academe. Follow-up studies entail thorough investigation to come up with available and extant materials to be explored likewise to increase the data on hand. It is at least gratifying that the early folklores have been made available and that the early writers are reintroduced and could possibly be honored in the future. The research activity, though challenging, proves to be a very rewarding experience. More than the positivity is the struggle that this shall be met with interest and enthusiasm.

Bataan literature explores the artistry of the early inhabitants as it showcases their creativity, intellect and values through their oral literature. The folklores greatly express the innate racial background of the early Bataños. Hundreds of years later, the 20th century writers have continued their quest for identity mirrored in their texts; for they have been eyewitnesses to the ill-fated Filipinos who have been under the control of Spain, the United States, then the Japanese. Their works speak of a character; the sentiments, the tolerant virtue and finally, the awakened nationalism disclosed by their manuscripts. The use of discourse in their works wholly belongs to the Bataños who aspire to hallmark their own distinction, the people who have ceaselessly struggled for their independence.

There is a great exhilaration that the century old manuscripts bestowed by early writers can be finally introduced especially to the present learners. The old oral literature in every town which were later transposed in written form has a distinctness that should be appreciated in the classroom and be valued. The legends and myths, proverbs and sayings, riddles, folktales, poetry and songs that are intended for each particular group of people are worthy of re-orientation and reevaluation. The study is hoped to instill awareness on their existence and consequently inspire more research works on them.

Acknowledgment

The author and her co-researchers are indebted to the Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) Research and Development Office (RDO) headed by President Gregorio J. Rodis for his most encouraging support for research endeavors. Due recognition is extended to the Research staff of the university led by Vice President Hermogenes M. Paguia and Director Rodrigo C. Munoz, Jr. for their catching passion and vigor for research excellence. Likewise, a commendation is due to the DepEd Bataan division for its shared enthusiasm in the undertaking. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is hereby acknowledged for its continuous impetus to enrich regional studies. Above all, praises and glory to Jehovah God for the initial accomplishment of this research.

References

- Ateneo Library of Women's Writings. (2019) *Nieves Baens-Del Rosario*. [Online URL: http://rizal.lib.admu.edu.ph/aliww/filipino_nieves_b_delrosario.html] accessed on July 25, 2019.
- DECS Bataan. (1989) *Bataan: Isang Balik-Tanaw Hanggang 1941*. Quezon City: APO Production Unit.
- Executive Order No. 486. (2007) Official Gazette of the Philippines. [Online URL: <http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/12/07/executive-order-no-486-s-1951>] accessed on March 25, 2019.
- Francisco, L. (2017) *Ang beterano* (Reprint). Manila, Philippines: Komisyon sa Wikang Pilipino.
- BusinessMirror. (2018) Hope and despair. A conversation between Nena Saguil and Eulogio B. Rodriguez. *Business Mirror*. [Online URL: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2018/11/13/hope-and-despair-a-conversation-between-nena-saguil-and-eulogio-b-rodriguez/>] accessed on July 25, 2019.
- Lalas-Garcia, L. (2018) *Sources and influences of the 20th century Kapampangan novels*. Glienicke/Nordbahn, Germany: Galda-Verlag.
- Magpantay, D., et al. (2017) *Sulyap at pangarap. Kasaysayan ng bayan ng Orani sa Bataan. Orani, Bataan*: Orani Historical Committee.
- Reyes, S. (2003) *Ang silid na mahiwaga*. Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing.
- Taylan, D. (2002) Pagbuhay kay Hilaria Labog: Isang hakbang tungo sa feminismo. *Malay XVII* 1: 109-127.
- Westwood, M. (2013) *What is literature*. eNotes. [Online URL: <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-literature-437857>] accessed on March 04, 2019.

Unpublished Reference:

DECS, Bataan (1953) A Compilation of Bataan Literature.