

## How to Cite

Dalocdoc, P. J. (2025). Benguet Kankanaey self-representations in local films in Benguet, Philippines. *International Journal of Humanities, Literature and Arts*, 8(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.21744/ijhla.v8n1.2367>

# Benguet Kankanaey Self-Representations in Local Films in Benguet, Philippines

**Peter Jr. Dalocdoc**

*Benguet State University, Philippines*

*Corresponding author email: [p.dalocdocjr@bsu.edu.ph](mailto:p.dalocdocjr@bsu.edu.ph)*

**Abstract---***This paper studies the self-representation of the Benguet Kankanaey, an Igorot subgroup that occupies the northern part of the province of Benguet, in local films. Guided by the post-colonial theory as the framework and textual analysis as a tool, this study underscores that local films serve as space for the Kankanaey to counter the alternate realities about them being reinforced in Philippine mainstream media. In particular, local films counter the misrepresentations by emphasizing agency. This paper further proposes that local films serve as a tool for resistance against misrepresentation in mainstream cinema. Containing constructive representations of their complex lives, the production of local films should be sustained.*

**Keywords---***Benguet Kankanaey, Counter-Discourse, Local films, Postcolonial Theory, Self-representation.*

## The Kankanaey and Igorot in Mainstream Media

The six provinces of the Philippine Cordillera region are home to seven major Indigenous ethnolinguistic groups. These are the Ifugao people of Ifugao, the Bontok and the northern Kankana-ey people of the Mountain Province, the Kalinga people of Kalinga, the Itneg people of Apayao, and the Tingguian people of Abra. Benguet, meanwhile, is occupied by the Ibaloy and the southern Kankana-ey people (Prill-Brett, 2017). Collectively referred to as the Igorot people, these Indigenous groups are subjected to negative representations that “exoticize and freeze them from ideal, primitive past” (Fong 2007) in mainstream media.

Fong (2014), explains that the proliferation of such representations of Indigenous peoples can be traced back to the colonial era of the Philippines. For instance, during the Spanish regime from 1521 to 1898, colonizers convinced the native population from the lowlands to consider Igorots as inferior and different by branding them as “uncouth, dirty, barbaric, and savages” (p.78). This was because, unlike the country’s people in the lowland areas, the Spanish were unable to subjugate the Igorots who were living in the hinterlands of the Cordillera Mountain range. Prill-Brett (1994) narrates that while the lowland Philippines was under the Spanish crown, the Igorot people remained free to continue with their ways of governing their land.

The formation of such contested images continued through the American occupation from 1898 to 1946. Salvador-Amores (2020), chronicles that Dean Conant Worcester, then chief of the Bureau of the Non-Christian Tribes, explored Northern Luzon and documented their lifestyle through photographs. She notes, “Worcester’s approach to the photographs was based on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideas of race and evolution, his photos reflect paradigms of social evolutionism, racism, and colonial paternalism” (p.83).

The representations continue to exist in mainstream films, television programs, and even postcards produced in the Philippine capital region. Tindaan (2010), describes the images of the Igorots in Philippine mainstream cinema using two master tropes of colonialism. The first trope, infantilization, regards the colonized as immature, inferior individuals whose intellectual faculties equate to that of a child. It further notes the dependence of the colonized on superior Europe for civility, sustenance, and security. She illustrates this through the film *Sabel* (2004) where the Ibaloy people are depicted as “on the passive end of the opposition because they are depicted as incapable of sustaining a fight for themselves” (p.88). She adds that the film portrays “the Highlander and the Highland culture are inferior with its inclination to subsistence and idleness” (p.90) because a lowlander character was shown to speak on their behalf.

Animalization, the second trope, portrays the colonized as a people practicing animal-like behaviors. In the film *Mumbaki* (1996), the Ifugao people were depicted as “savage warriors hungry for revenge” (p.91) and who “accept no other means of settling disputes except through bloodshed” (p.91). [Tindaan \(2010\)](#), adds that bestiality practices by the Ifugao people in the film connote their alleged “backwardness”.

[Torres \(2006\)](#), also finds the Igorots exoticized in postcards. In her analysis, “the Igorot as the exotic other” is reinforced by portraying them wearing traditional clothes such as g-string (*bahag*) and skirt (*tapis*). In one photo, a white woman was shown linking arms with a statue of an Igorot man in a g-string. Toress writes, “Her wide grin reflects the cheap thrills of posing beside an Igorot male represented as an exotic macho figure (p. 132).” Torres further notes that the erroneous labeling of the different Indigenous groups heightens their “exotic” image. “One Indigenous group is made to represent an entire social category that leaves no space for the exercise of subjectivity (p.143),” the author adds.

In contrast with mainstream media representations, [Tindaan \(2010\)](#), notes that vernacular films created by local filmmakers themselves contain constructive images that represent who they are. In her analysis of vernacular films in the Philippine Cordillera, she observes that Igorot filmmakers portray themselves as self-reliant and hardworking. In addition, she finds that they are far from relying on outsiders to act as heroes, as portrayed by mainstream media. Vernacular films produced by Indigenous community members offer a more faithful representation compared to those produced by outsiders because, as [Tindaan \(2010\)](#) explains, members of Indigenous groups are more well-informed and have first-hand knowledge of their lives and ways in their communities as compared to outsiders who portray them in cinematic productions. As such, Igorot film production has become an opportunity to resist the representations of the Philippine mainstream media. However, [Tindaan \(2010\)](#), clarifies that the vernacular films produced by religious organizations can still reinforce misrepresentations about the Igorot people due to their religious agenda.

### **Indigenous People’s Self-Representation in Local Films**

While mainstream films portray Indigenous groups from an outsider’s perspective, local films are arguably more well-positioned to engage in discourses that Indigenous communities face. [Lempert \(2012\)](#), contends that their “personal experiences and complex relationships to home communities” position them to engage in a “critical Indigenous identity discourse” (p.93). Similarly, [Ginsburg \(1991\)](#), says “Indigenous media productions make it clear that they are capable of representing themselves” (p.102) She adds that these films are examples of how they represent themselves where the perceptions of “us” and “them” are contrasted. In another work, [Ginsburg \(1994\)](#), writes that indigenous media production and other related initiatives bring light to historical and cultural truths.

In the Philippines, contemporary mainstream media representations of Igorot people “have become something else” because they are portrayed as something from the past ([Fong 2014](#)). Therefore, [Fong \(2014\)](#), argues that studying aspects of Igorot popular culture “will help balance both internal and external efforts to represent the Igorot as still in an unclad, prehistoric state”.

[Fong \(2014\)](#), notes that through local pop culture productions, Indigenous groups are “constructing a different narrative that is more reflective of their contemporary everyday lives, about what they are becoming in a rapidly but unevenly globalizing world.” Local films, meanwhile, present current discourses in Kankanaey communities about what they are and what they have become.

Following the assertions above, this paper discusses the self-representations in local film production in Benguet. Here, I answer the following questions: How do Kankanaey filmmakers construct and present themselves in their films? How do they respond to the “alternate realities” about them? Specifically, I investigate the development of local film production in Benguet and examine how the Kankana-ey people contest mainstream media representations of them through images constructed in local films produced by Benguet-based secular groups ([Ambros, A. P., & Buzinde, 2021](#)).

### **Representation, Postcolonialism, and Counter-Discourse**

[Hall \(1997\)](#), classified representation into two: mental representation and language representation. Mental representation is a “conceptual map” in a person’s mind that forms an abstract concept. Language representation, on the other hand, creates a meaning for the formed abstract concept, eventually associated with symbols, and is shared through a common language.

[Hall \(1997\)](#), further divided representation into three theories: reflective approach, intentional approach, and construction approach. The reflective approach posits that media accurately depicts the world as it is. The intentional approach emphasizes that meaning depends on the point of view of producers or creators who encode the message

through media products. The constructionist approach, the third perspective, asserts that meanings are constructed depending on the power relations surrounding the persons who interpret the representations. With the third approach, I investigate how the Benguet Kankanaey represent themselves in their films.

This study on how the Kankanaey communities represent themselves in cinematic productions calls for the use of the postcolonial theory because of its inclination toward the “othered” communities. Othering is a postcolonial thought that marginalizes one or a group. According to [Patajo-Legasto \(2008\)](#), postcolonial theory has two major characteristics. First, it aims to dismantle dominant Western thought. Second, it serves as an “articulation of alternative practices” of the victims of the oppression. In this study, local films serve as the tool for the Kankanaey to articulate who they are.

Among the key concepts of postcolonial theory is counter-discourse. Counter-discourse is a concept that challenges the ideologies of a dominant power. Coined by Richard Terdiman, it characterizes the “theory and practice of symbolic resistance ([Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H., 2007](#)). In other words, counter-discourse aims to represent reality to challenge the dominant discourse established by social institutions. In the case of Kankanaey, local films are used to respond to the dominant stereotypes developed by Philippine mainstream media ([Kidd, 2016](#)).

### Local film Production in Benguet

Local film production in Benguet, according to [Tindaan \(2010\)](#), began when Sammy “Samiklad” Dangpa of the municipality of Buguias in Benguet founded the Vernacular Video Ministry (VVM) in 1993 with support from American Lutheran missionaries. Their goal was to promote Christianity in Indigenous communities through vernacular language films. Some of the films they have produced include *Laton pay Dedan* (It will be All Right, 2001), *Kedaw* (Request, 2007), and *Sabong di Kada* (Flowers of Kada, 1998). Upon receiving positive audience reception, VVM further tried to disseminate their films by putting them in video compact discs (VCDs) in 1993. VVM films usually contain narratives of the Igorot people’s encounter with modernity, promotion of Christian values, and portrayals of Igorot traditions and values. Several plots are adapted from Biblical stories and are commonly accompanied by text and voice narration. Some scenes feature video clips of actual cultural events such as weddings and wakes and interviews with community members. From 1993 to 2008, VVM produced 16 films ([Tindaan 2010](#)).

When they became popular, more local filmmakers in Benguet were encouraged to create their own. Realizing the economic potential of filmmaking, several local production houses were established. Filmmaker Rosendo “Sendong” Salvacio from the town of Bakun in Benguet established *Talaw Sendong Productions* in 2007. Under his filmmaking company, he produced music videos of his own recorded music. Later, he began to make full-length films such as *Talaw the Movie* (Star, 2008) and *Baes* (Revenge; 2014). Salvacio (personal communication, June 24, 2018) recalls that some people behind the filmmaking companies were former members of the staff of VVM.

Compared to those released by VVM, these film producers chose not to make Bible-based stories. This time, according to Salvacio and Nestor “Boyong” Daguines (personal communication (June 25, 2018), their personal experiences, knowledge, and cultures as members of the Kankana-ey Indigenous community became the basis for the plots of their movies. Salvacio shares that he adopted some of the plots from American movies but contextualized them to fit the Igorot context. Sendong’s adoption of American films could be appropriated to the American occupation in the country. [Fong \(2007\)](#), notes that Baguio City, the first city in the Cordillera, was established by the Americans. He further explains that one of the influences of the Americans on Philippine culture is music, particularly folk, rock, and country genre. This genre is associated with the rustic “Western” cowboy lifestyle which happened to capture the interest of the Igorots. This further explains their penchant for cowboy fashion items such as jeans, leather jackets and boots, plaid polo, and Stetson hats. Cowboy fashion is common in community events such as the Adivay Festival. The Adivay Festival is an annual agri-tourism activity sponsored by the provincial government of Benguet. The events include horse racing, battle of the bands, where contestants commonly play country music, and more. Further, many bars in Baguio and La Trinidad have named their establishments with terms associated with country music. These establishments include Baguio Country Sounds, Wild West, Old West, and Cowboy’s Town, among others, where musicians in their cowboy attires play country songs live onstage. They have also created their own “Benguet Country” as described by [Fong \(2007\)](#), as the use of tunes, adaptation, and translation of popular American country music into the Cordillera languages.

The film production in the Cordilleras follows the guerilla marketing model ([Telles, 2020](#)). This model has an “ultra-low budget,” self-funding, and employs a few talents or crew ([Ryan, 2015, p. 88, as cited in Telles, 2020](#)). In the preproduction stage, Kankanaey filmmakers first consider how to capture the interest of their viewers. Sendong adds that he focuses on the Igorot culture in his films because his audience can relate to the plots. For Bestoca, he produces films that revolve around “positive community values.” After coming up with story ideas, filmmakers simply

develop a story and then proceed with the shooting. As Telles (2020) notes, scriptwriting is not a practice among local filmmakers.

In terms of genre, both Sendong and Nestor Clemente (personal communication, June 27, 2018) prefer romance and drama. They both claim the audience also likes action films, but Sendong explains that logistics and financial constraints hinder them from producing more. Unlike drama, which is cheaper to produce, action films require the purchase of expensive props and reshoots on the fight scenes, which they cannot afford. Horror does not sit well with the audience. Nestor Daguines (personal communication, June 25, 2018) explains he tried to create a horror film, but it did not gain many views and appreciation when he posted the trailer online. He explains that he used a “white lady,” a lowland abject of horror, which his Igorot audience could not relate to (Telles, 2020).

In terms of casting, auditions are not conducted even if the filmmakers want to, due to budget constraints. Sendong says they simply rely on recommendations and resort to “accidental actors” where they ask any person available to take a role. There are also cases where they partnered with business establishments to raise funds in exchange for exposure where their sponsor’s business is either one of the locations in the film or is simply recognized in the credits. He adds that his budget for a film is around P100,000 to P200,000. Daguines spent around P50,000 for his animated film *Lampitok*, the name of the main character.

Compared to mainstream films, local filmmakers spend a little amount for distribution and exhibition. To sell more, the producers go beyond displaying CD copies in their store outlets. They go house-to-house to sell copies of their videos. For Sendong, this is a “unique strategy” to sell. To date, there are no cinemas that screen Indigenous films.

To develop talents and protect the interest of local film production, local artists and producers formed the Cordillera Producers Recording Arts Association (CIPRAA) in 2000 and later renamed to Cordillera Indigenous Audio-Visual Association (CIAVA) in 2013. However, the organization remained an unregistered association. Due to financial constraints, Sendong laments that his fellow local musicians and filmmakers have ceased production.

### Self-representation of the Benguet Kankanaey

Films were subject to textual analysis to understand how the Kankanaey create a representation of themselves. Five non-secular-produced films, identified as “best-selling” films in store outlets in Baguio and Benguet, were chosen. Table 1 shows the titles of the films and the production company of the films under study. In these films, animalization, infantilization, and “exotic” images are challenged.

Table 1  
List of films subject to the study

Film Title	Production Company
Ganab di Talek (Reward of Trust)	Quilito Productions and Awisan Video Works
Banor di Pamilia (Value of Family)	Igorot Films and Dixon Codod Productions
Ganab di Anos (Fruit of Perseverance)	Quilito Entertainment and Nesvelye Video Production
Arapaap di Napuan si Anak (Parents’ Dream for their Children)	An-ak Ti Cordillera

#### *Quest for a meaningful life*

One of the strategies to challenge immaturity is by featuring stories of the Kankanaey where other characters learn from their narratives. This strategy was used in *In Ganab di Anos* (Fruit of Perseverance; Quilito Entertainment and Nesvelye Video Production, 2009). The film tells the story of Tipak and Wally in their quest for a better and more meaningful life. Bullied in school, Tipak and Wally decided not to continue their schooling despite the intervention from their parents and teachers. At a young age, they have already decided to forgo school and to work for a living and earn money instead. Sharing their plans, the English subtitle reads:

Let’s go to make money and help our parents. I will go to work in the garden. I’ll let my father save my money.  
Then when we already have enough money, I’ll buy a cow and make a house for ourselves. and buy cars too!

Growing old, they left their hometown Pan-ayaoan, Buguias, and moved to Cada, a farming site in the municipality of Mankayan, Benguet, to work under the “pa-supply” system. This is a common practice wherein the supplier provides the farmer with all the inputs including land, fertilizers, and pesticides for the planting season. The total expenses are

deducted from the gross income when the crop is harvested and sold. The remaining balance is divided between the parties as their net income. Through hard work and perseverance, they brought themselves out of poverty. They built their own houses and earned money. But as adults, they still found something was missing. In one conversation with their relatives, Wally encouraged them to continue their education. The English subtitle reads:

“Tipak and I didn’t go to school. We thought gardening is a better option because there is more money in gardening. We persevered, earned money, and built our house. We thought that we already had all that we need. But life is still incomplete... It is true that even if you have money, a house, and other things you need if you do not have education, you still lack something. That’s why I tell you now, that you should value education. Be not dismayed nor lose hope. You value the sacrifices of your parents because you are their hope.”

Though Tipak and Wally were already financially able despite their lack of education, they encouraged their cousins not to follow in their footsteps. For them, success is not only about economic gains but also intellectual growth. Tipak and Wally’s characters developed into mature individuals by foregrounding their stories as sources of encouragement to the younger generation. It is further strengthened when Tipak vowed to provide financial support to Paula, her younger sister.

While working in Cada, Tipak met Lotlo-e, his love interest. Their love blossomed but Lotlo-e had to move to her aunt who was in Pangasinan. Their only means of communication was through letters. Since neither Tipak nor Wally could read nor write, they visited Adoki to read Lotlo-e’s letter aloud. Through Adoki, Tipak replied to Lotlo-e. This is in contrast to inferiority being associated with Indigenous groups. Though incapable, Tipak found support from Adoki, not an outsider but also a member of the community. This opposes mainstream representation and Western thought that Indigenous groups need someone from the outside to rescue them.

#### *Ability to overcome personal struggles*

Like *Ganab di Anos*, the film *Arapaap di Napuan si Anak* (Parents’ Dream for their Children; An-ak di Cordillera Production, 2010) resists inferiority and immaturity by featuring character development and success stories. The film tells the story of Lander also known as Coynotan who was born to parents who are farmers. Determined to provide for the financial needs of their son to finish his studies, his father accepted other side jobs such as construction works apart from farming. Before leaving for the city, Lander is lectured by his parents who constantly remind him of the hardships they must endure to earn his tuition money. Unknown to his parents, Lander did not take his studies seriously and succumbed to the allures of the city. He spent his tuition money on cigarettes and alcohol.

If Lander is irresponsible, his cousin Andrew is his opposite. His father envies him for his self-reliance and determination. Despite the lack of financial support, Andrew capitalized on his interest in sports to support his studies. Through scholarships, he finished his studies and is already a professional boxer.

Michael, Lander’s other *insan* (cousin) who witnessed his lack of sensibility, could not hold his guilt of not informing his father. He narrates that he found Coynotan in a bar where he handed him his tuition money. Confronted by his father, Coynotan downplayed it as mere hearsay.

Lander’s self-indulgence led to more problems. He missed paying his rent and was caught sleeping in class several times. He was also caught in a brawl, which led him to stay overnight in jail. Hearing the news, his father rushed to the city to settle Lander’s case, then brought him home. Though much of the scenes established Lander’s shortcomings, the later scenes revealed how Lander transformed into a sensible man. Realizing his shortcomings, he asked his parents for forgiveness and promised to do better. He got rid of his vices and joined religious activities. He also focused on his studies until he and his friends finally finished their degrees. Lander was hired as the municipal engineer. Dagul, Lander’s drinking companion, finished as a computer technician and opened his computer business. On the other hand, Steve was also hired as a public-school teacher. If Andrew struggled financially, Coynotan and Dagul also struggled against their self-indulgence. Coynotan and Dagul’s characters reflect that both of them have overcome their limitations and have grown to be responsible men. Despite their struggles, Lander and Dagul prove they are capable of redeeming themselves from their misdemeanors and building a better life for themselves.

Both *Ganab di Anos* and *Arapaap di Napuan si Anak* challenge the immaturity and inferiority of Indigenous people in mainstream films by foregrounding the ability of the Kankananey to recognize their limitations and transform their own lives through agency. Tipak and Wally’s decision to leave their hometown in *Ganab di Anos* to search for other sources of income in another place and the willingness of Lander’s parents to allow him to stay in the city to finish his education forward that migration is essential for progress.

#### *Peace-loving character*

In *Mumbaki* (Neo Films, 1996), the Igorots are presented as savages hungry for revenge (Tindaan, 2010). In contrast to secular-produced films such as *Ganab di Talek* (Reward of Faith; Quilito Productions and Awisan Video Works, 2009), the Kankanaey continues to live with a peace-loving character governed by shared cultural values. *Ganab di Talek* tells the story of Caloy, a farmer who went to La Trinidad, the capital town of Benguet, to sell his vegetable produce at the La Trinidad Vegetable Trading Post (LTVTP). There she met Charice, a fellow Kankanaey who became her love interest. When he visited her, he saw David who was persistent in seeing Charice despite her pleas for him to go back when he was sober. Caloy intervened but David attacked him. To protect himself, he took a stone and hit David on his head several times. Afraid of the consequences, he hid at Mt. Trail relying on water and raw sweet potatoes for sustenance.

While hiding, Caloy reached Dalinay's home. Convinced of Caloy's sincerity, she offered him food. Dalinnay convinced him to go home to settle this concern. Caloy's move to go into hiding reflects his lack of accountability. But despite this, he redeemed himself by going back home to resolve the conflict. After their conversation with Dalinnay, he returned to his parents who accompanied him to surrender to the authorities voluntarily. The police explained the legal proceedings, which the concerned family understood.

During the hearing, *Kapitan* (Barangay Captain) explained that their objective was to resolve Caloy and David's case. He did not rush the dialogue. He gave both parties a platform to explain themselves where voices were equally heard. David explained that Charice is her cousin and he visited her to fix some prior misunderstanding. Both Caloy and David admitted their mistakes. David was drunk when he attacked Caloy for meddling in their affairs. The sincerity of the individuals involved is evident since they agreed to an amicable settlement with no further arguments. During the hearing, it was noted that they were *man ton-od* (relatives) which in a way sped the process. David then asked Caloy to pay his hospitalization bills and other expenses incurred while he was in the hospital bed. Since Caloy did not have money, he asked if David could wait until the harvest season, which David agreed to.

Caloy's voluntary surrender with his parents' assistance reflects that the Kankanaey recognizes the rule of law. Though it took time for him to do so, his decision to show up demonstrated a behavior change. Further, the orderly hearing and negotiation between the two parties present an organized structure for solving conflicts in the community. Guided by established community values, peaceful solving of conflicts affirms their commitment to peace. The same characteristic is also evident in *Arapaap di Napuan si Anak* when Coynotan faced the bar owner at the police station. His uncle admitted Coynotan's misbehavior and then negotiated for a possible resolution. The bar owner, also a Kankanaey, asked Coynotan to pay for the damaged bar equipment.

Bagamaspad & Pawid (1985), in their account of the history of the people of Benguet, described that inter-family disputes then were settled through a mutually agreed settlement of the concerned families with the community elders who serve as arbiters. Depending on the agreement, the offended party would receive compensation for the damages. Called *tong-tong*, such practice has survived through the decades and is still practiced or observed up to the present. Common cases that lead to *tong-tong* are infidelity, theft, and physical and sexual assaults. In the case of Caloy, *tong-tong* played a key role in solving his case.

#### *Family as motivation and fortress*

Another film, *Banor di Pamilya* (Value of Family; Igorot Films and Dixon Codod Productions, 2012) foregrounds the importance of family. In the establishing shots in the first few minutes of the film, the family of five lives in a hut with agriculture as the source of their living. Through narration, Dixon claimed their life in the province was simple yet happy. Though he acknowledges they did not experience a comfortable life, he also underscored their unity as a family. While drinking coffee with his siblings, he shared he felt pity for their parents for not having experienced a luxurious life despite their age, and he is not contented with it. Calmly explaining his plan to his siblings, the caption reads:

Come to think of it, Father is already old while Mother is sick. That's the reason why I have to work to the other town so we could have something to buy her medicines. We still want for her to live a longer life. Aside from that my younger siblings, I want you to continue your studies. So that, when time will come, you could have a good life that you could take pride in.

As the eldest child, Dixon took responsibility for his siblings since their parents were no longer able to provide for their needs. His desire for his siblings to continue their studies for a better future highlights a forward outlook. With his family's blessings, Dixon left for the city for a better life. Like Tipak and Wally in *Ganab di Anos*, Dixon also recognizes that movement is essential to achieve their goals.

Dixon was invited to work in the mines, which he gladly accepted. In another narration, Dixon says his family was his motivation to concentrate on his work. Earning more, he sent financial support to his family in the province. But the allure of the city, such as alcohol, cigarettes, and gambling, did not escape Dixon's interest until he eventually forgot his own family. At one time, Kigod, his younger brother, visited him to inform him of their mother's worsening illness, but he rejected them. Their mother eventually died without him knowing. In this film, Dixon is presented to be vulnerable.

Due to misbehavior, Dixon was fired from work with no savings. He sought financial help from his peers but to no avail. Realizing he had nowhere to go, he went back to his family in the province. Upon discovering their mother's death, Dixon bent on his knees in his mother's grave and asked for forgiveness. If Dixon's sister and father warmly welcomed him, Kigod acted differently. When he offered a cup of coffee to his younger brother, Kigod replied: "Coffee? You're just trying out to be an actor." The opposing reactions of Dixon's family members to his comeback reflect Bhabha's concept of ambivalence. Ambivalence (Sersour, 2019), refers to the "splitting of the feelings between positive and negative attitudes towards the colonizers" (p.701). In the case of *Banor di Pamilya*, Dixon's family was elated when he provided financial support to them. But as Dixon progressed, he belittled his family for being poor. In his desire to enjoy a good life with his partner, he cut his filial connection. With his downfall, the need for support from his family resurfaced.

### *Far from the Exotic Other*

Marketed as a tourist destination, the prevalence of g-strings, *tapis*, and other woodcarvings in Baguio City became icons of "Igorotness" (Torres, 2006). The author explained that these portrayals in colonial media contributed to the commercialization of the Igorot culture. In contrast, these items are not reflected in the Kankanaey films. The elders, usually photographed in their *g-string* and *tapis*, wear contemporary clothes such as pants and shirts in *Ganab di Talek*. The same is true for all the characters in the studied films. No character in the films wore a *g-string* or *tapis*. Today, these are no longer used as day-to-day clothing but are only worn in cultural performances and on special occasions such as weddings and graduation ceremonies. Along with other Cordillera textiles, the Benguet Kankanaey textiles continue to evolve. To satisfy the changing customer demands, weavers "refashion any concept of a static 'authenticity' by incorporating textile designs that speak both of modernity and local Indigenous identity (Milgram, 2020)" The refashioning of the textiles does not mean they abandon their cultural value. Bruner (1994), as cited in Milgram, 2020) argues that the issue of authenticity is a "contested site" and posits that "culture is emergent, always alive and in process (p. 407)"

### **Conclusion**

This study on Kankanaey local film affirms the authority of secular Indigenous films to create images that speak of who they are and what they have become. Despite the challenges in film production, local films serve as one of the forums for their stories to be heard. Through constructive representation, they narrate how they overcome challenges through hard work and determination. They also underpin the importance of change. Kankanaey local films further portray their commitment to peace through peaceful negotiations during conflicts. These self-representations are contrary to the reinforced mainstream media misrepresentations.

Containing rich and faithful self-representation of the complex lives of the Kankanaey, local Kankanaey films serve as spaces for them to articulate how they navigate change. Apart from economic and entertainment pursuits, Kankanaey films also serve as a tool for resistance. It serves as an opportunity for them to enter the public space. With these functions, local film production should be sustained.

### **References**

- Ambros, A. P., & Buzinde, C. N. (2021). Indigenous self-representations in the touristic sphere. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 86, 103099. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.103099>
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2007). *Post-colonial studies: The key concepts*. New York: Routledge.
- Bagamaspad, A., & Hamada-Pawid, Z. (1985). A people's history of Benguet. *Baguio City: Baguio Printing and Publishing Corporation*.
- Bruner, E. M. (1994). Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism. *American Anthropologist*, 96(2): 397–415.
- Fong, J. B. (2007, June). Batawa: Constructing identity through country music in the Philippine Cordillera. In *Inter: A European Cultural Studies: Conference in Sweden 11–13 June 2007* (p. 109).

- Fong, J. B. (2014). Media production literacy as a form of intercultural communication competence: Demystifying indigenous peoples in the Philippine Cordillera. *Intercultural communication competence: Conceptualization and its development in cultural contexts and interactions*, 275-92.
- Ginsburg, F. (1991). Indigenous media: Faustian contract or global village?. *Cultural anthropology*, 6(1), 92-112.
- Ginsburg, F. (1994). Embedded aesthetics: creating a discursive space for indigenous media. *Cultural anthropology*, 9(3), 365-382.
- Hall, S. (1997). The spectacle of the other. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, 7, 223-290.
- Kidd, M. A. (2016). Archetypes, stereotypes and media representation in a multi-cultural society. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 236, 25-28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.12.007>
- Lempert, W. (2012). Telling their own stories: Indigenous film as critical identity discourse. *The applied anthropologist*, 32(1), 23-32.
- Milgram, B. L. (2020). Fashioning frontiers in artisanal trade: social entrepreneurship and textile production in the Philippine Cordillera. *South East Asia Research*, 28(4), 413-431.
- Patajo-Legasto, P. (2008). *Philippine studies: have we gone beyond St. Louis?*. UP Press.
- Prill-Brett, J. (1994). Indigenous land rights and legal pluralism among Philippine highlanders. *Law & Society Review*, 28(3), 687-697.
- Prill-Brett, J. (2017). From a complex to degraded system: laws, customs, market forces and legal pluralism in the Cordillera, northern Philippines. In *Shifting cultivation policies: balancing environmental and social sustainability* (pp. 717-731). Wallingford UK: CABI.
- Salvador-Amores, A. (2020). Re-examining Igorot representation: issues of commodification and cultural appropriation. *South East Asia Research*, 28(4), 380-396.
- Sersour, A. (2019). Hybridity, Ambivalence, and Postcolonial Algerian Novel. *Global Scientific Journals*. 7(4), 697-708.
- Telles, J. P. (2020). Local film production in the Philippine Cordillera: processes, motivations, and constraints. *Plaridel Journal*, 17(2), 99-122.
- Tindaan, R. (2010). Imaging the Igorot in vernacular films produced in the Cordillera. *The Cordillera Review*, 2(2), 81-118.
- Torres, A. C. K. V. (2006). Igorot representation in Cordillera picture postcards.