

## The Bontoc Eulogy DVD Presentation: Reactions

*Collated by Caridad B. Fiar-od*

The film was viewed on 6 May 2005 in the evening and after the viewing was the open forum of which reactions, comments were given focused on the theme, "The Igorot Cordillera Culture: Heritage and Social Integration." These were the reactions in one's random thoughts by individual reactors/commentators in the sequential order of time: (Note: The reactions are explained as to how the moderator understands it but no malice towards anybody)

1. Severino Oblas (Germany). He pointed out the identity of those in the script as to who they were being his relatives. This reveals that there were Benguet recruits who were part of the exposition. He said that the film in some aspects reflects the spirituality of the Igorots.
2. Henry Pit-og (USA). In reaction to an earlier reaction during the Missouri presentation, he expressed his sentiments on the need for those Igorots recruited to have at least been compensated in any way but they were not. He posed a question whether the Igorots transported were aware of the intention of the Americans in bringing them to St. Louis.
3. Mia Abeya (USA). Upon seeing how some members of the group seemed to mixed emotions about the film, she explained the background of the St. Louis Exposition in Missouri in 1904. She stated that the United States was at a time when it was trying to justify continued existence of the United States in the Philippines. The US officials brought the Igorots to the St. Louis World's Fair to display their "barbaric" difference and to ask the US to "enlighten" them by maintaining presence in the Philippines. She also explained how the Bontoc Eulogy came to exist as a film by Marlon Fuentes. According to her, Marlon Fuentes was given a grant and the most material that he could find interesting was the involvement of the Igorots in the St. Louis World's Fair. She expressed that although the film seemed to be a documentary, it was in fact a combination of fiction and facts as dramatized and that fiction be differentiated from facts. Mia further said that having viewed the film made her think of her forefathers who were part of the exposition. She stated that she believes the Igorots who came to the US were just like you and me – not aware of the political maneuverings but were on board to "experience a new world". She related about the Igorot brain that never went home to Bontoc. She explained how Wydown School made a research on why the school's mascot was named "Igorrote" through the internet and how they found IGO and finally invited Rex Botengan and others to visit the school. This further got the IGO to make St.Louis as the venue for IIC-5 in time for the 100 year celebration of the St. Louis World's Fair. Mia in an encompassing statement views the film as fact and fiction with the Igorots to have been schooled on their own rules of survival.
4. Cesar Taguba (Netherlands). In a more highly analytical point of view premised on the film viewed, he related his comment as to the relevance of the early recruits to the present migration issue and in passing, Cesar expressed his proposal for the need for a Migrant Commission to exist in the Philippines. This is to address migration issues to avoid future similar predicaments, Igorot migrants may encounter.
5. Elizabeth Omengan (USA). She focused on the congruency of the title and that of the substantial projection of the film. As Elizabeth said, the title of the film is eulogy of which she expected that the film should have included expressions of giving tribute to the dead like *baya-o* among some ethnic tribes as implied in eulogy. While she appreciates Marlon Fuentes, the production manager, the film should have been more reflective of the factual Bontoc eulogy as a cultural heritage.

6. Nellie Pit-og (USA). In reaction to the previous reaction, she expressed her hope that hopefully there will be Igorots as film producers or directors who are very knowledgeable of the Igorot culture in addition to Marlon Fuentes who is not pure Igorot.
7. Conchita Pooten (UK). In relation to Igorot film producers, she advocated the Igorot films in CD and DVD of a certain Dangpa. She solicited the support of the group and other Igorots in patronizing and popularizing the film. As Conchita said, "Let us support the worthwhile project of Igorots in producing films and in writing books to document the Igorot culture in its real sense and not scripted."
8. Caridad Fiar-od (Philippines) as Moderator. As a rejoinder of all the comments given, Marlon Fuentes is still to be acknowledged for having produced a film. The comments are given for purposes of understanding cultural heritage.

While the film combined fiction and facts, fantasy and reality, it is a fact that Igorots were among the recruits and may have contributed to the American government in any way or it may also be said that the participation of the Igorots in the exposition may or may not have influenced the immigration of many Igorots to USA. These are just speculations. Whether the Igorots understood or they did not as to the objective of recruiting them to be at the exposition, let's just be optimistic that their spiritual presence has contributed to the success of the many Igorots who migrated and are now living with all the comforts that America could offer.

Resolved, as it is hereby resolved, that the issue on supporting Igorot film producers be brought out to the IIC6 planning committee for consideration to include the protection of intellectual property rights of Igorots in their creative or literary-arts work. This would minimize the pirating of films/books produced by Igorots. As Marlon Fuentes said, "One day, I will be gone and memories will be lost." Let us also bring out in us the way we were for memories shed light on to the reality of culture.