



## Looking From a Window: A Critical Analysis of the T'boli's Worldview Through their Oral Traditions

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### Abstract

This study analyses a collective worldview through the values embodied in the oral traditions of the T'boli, an indigenous tribe in Lake Sebu, the Philippines. Utilising ethnographic method, data collection is made primarily through informants' in-depth interview and literary criticism of the oral traditions. The study records, transcribes, translates, codes and classifies the T'boli's oral traditions according to their genre. Framed under Carl Jung's Archetypal Criticism's perspective, it identifies T'boli's religious, human, and cultural values in the mythical characters and in the recurring motifs and themes of their oral traditions. The prominent motifs in T'boli's oral traditions are the controlling imageries of a deity and a body of water. The recurring didactic teachings in the themes are devotion, altruism, and deference. The embodied values are faithfulness, generosity and respect and obedience to authority. These values shape the T'boli's worldview in terms of their cultural and religious practices and traditions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The T'boli is one of the indigenous tribes whose cultural community is settled in Lake Sebu, a southern municipality in Mindanao island, the Philippines. They are known for their intricately designed *T'nalak*, a traditional hand-woven cloth made of Abaca fiber. They shared a common belief in their oral traditions that the complex design of the *T'nalak* was revealed to their ancestors through a dream (Manzano, 2016). It is through dream and other motifs in their oral traditions that this study is focused on.

Oral traditions serve as a window to T'boli's world view and culture (Casal, 2008). Chamalah, et. al. (2019) explicate that oral traditions embody a distinct wisdom of a cultural community. Handed down generation to generations by word of mouth, oral traditions narrate stories which embed the tribe's cultural, religious, and human values. These values are essential to keep the identity of their culture, their community- the tribe (Heissig & Schott, 1998).

However, with the advent of information and communication technologies, and the rapid urbanisation in the cultural community of the T'boli in Lake Sebu, these traditions are gradually losing their popularity especially with the younger T'boli generations (Casal, 2008). This condition has subsequently led to the gradual extinction of these traditions. Rapid socio-cultural change triggered by technology-enabled modern media of mass communication has made this dire situation inevitable (Enenche, 2019)

This existing cultural gap between T'boli generations is even widened by the fact of the mortality of the tribe's elders who are the forebearers of their oral traditions and are supposed to pass on these to the younger generations of the tribe. Thus, it is imperative that these oral traditions be preserved through academic documentation in this study to sustain their transmission and to avoid losing them irretrievably. Subsequently, the publication of this work can help promote this cultural heritage especially among the younger and the future T'boli generations.

### **Statements of the Research Problem**

This study sought to understand T'boli's worldview through the values embodied in their oral traditions. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the genres of the T'boli's oral traditions?
2. What are the traits of the mythical characters that are revealed in the T'boli's oral traditions?
3. What are the recurring motifs and themes in the T'boli's oral traditions?
4. What values are embodied in the T'boli's oral traditions?
5. How do these values shape the T'boli's worldview?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Carl Jung's "collective unconscious" theory is the foundation of the Archetypal Criticism which is the theoretical framework in this study. In his theory, Carl Jung posits that human race is linked with their ancestors through a shared set of experiences which are lodged in their "collective unconscious" regardless of time and space.

Carl Jung, as quoted by Walker (2002), postulates that literature including the oral traditions are human expressions that reveal this "collective unconscious" or their shared beliefs, desires, fears and anxieties. Hence, Archetypal Criticism interprets a literary text through its visual archetypes or the recurring psychical images, primordial symbols, patterns of actions, and collective motifs embedded in narratives which reveal the human race's shared dreams, religions and fantasies or the "collective unconscious".

### **Literature Review**

#### *The T'boli Culture*

The T'boli family is patriarchal and extended. A typical T'boli household includes the immediate family and the grandparents. Authority is vested on the father whose decisions and orders are obeyed by the family members. The mother, on the other hand, merely gives suggestions on how to carry out the father's decisions (Manzano, 2016).

The authority of the father in the household is anchored on a cultural belief that the father is the strongest member of the family by virtue of his masculinity. He is therefore culturally expected to protect his family from danger and harm. He cannot perform this inherent role unless his decisions and orders are obeyed (Casal, 2008).

Agriculture and aquaculture works revolve in the daily life of the T'boli family. Farming and fresh water fishing are two of their main livelihoods. A T'boli husband starts his day before sunrise. During the planting season, he plows the field, plants rice or corn and sow intercrop seeds. When harvest time comes, he must set aside a part of his harvest for the day for the anticipated harvest ritual known as *kemini* (Talavera, 2016).

A T'boli wife, on the other hand, is as busy as her husband. In the morning, she does household chores and takes care of the younger children. At noon time, she goes to the farm or lake where her husband works to bring him his lunch. She usually takes lunch with her husband. After lunch, she assists her husband in intercropping *camote* or *ube* (purple yam), which are two of T'boli's staple food. At home, in the afternoon, a T'boli wife weaves *T'nalak* or looms *M'long*. Both are indigenous fabrics the T'boli are known for (Casal, 2008).

Talavera (2013) observes that families settled near one of the three lakes, a T'boli wife usually assist her husband paddle *owong*, a T'boli traditional boat. She helps in feeding and harvesting Tilapia from a fish pond set up in the lake. The T'boli's older children are given specific household responsibilities based on the gender of a child. A *logi* (older boy) assists his father in gathering firewood, clearing the farmland by *kaingin* practice, taking care of domesticated animals and fishing. Conversely, a *libun* (girl) assists her mother at home in doing household chores such as fetching water, washing clothes, chops firewood, and prepare food for the family. At the farm, she helps her father in sowing seeds, weeding the rice or corn fields and harvesting the produce. A T'boli girl learns how to weave and dye Abaca fiber and embroiders *T'nalak* (Casal, 2008).

Talavera (2013) discusses that T'boli society accepts the practice of polygamy. A T'boli man can have as many wives as he can, as long as he can afford to pay the dowry and can support his wives and his children with them. Being a patriarchal society, a T'boli man's marital status commands respect. The more wives he has, the more his community look up to him. It is believed that polygamy measures a T'boli man's physical, sexual and economic strengths.

In a polygamous T'boli home, the first wife has more authority than the succeeding wives. When a T'boli husband decides to take another wife, he has to ask the consent of his

first wife. The first wife also delegates household chores and fieldworks to other wives. The T'boli's cultural practice of communal living starts at home with the practice of polygamy (Talavera, 2013).

The payment of dowry to the family of a woman by a man who intends to marry her is a traditional cultural practice among the T'boli. The family of a T'boli woman dictates what dowry must be given. The dowry can be or a combination of horses, carabaos, goats, or precious metals and instruments. A dowry of greater value is demanded for a daughter of a *datu*, village chieftain (Talavera, 2013).

Divorce is allowed in T'boli society. A man may divorce his wife on the following grounds: sterility and infidelity. In fact, a husband may kill his wife if she is unfaithful to him. When a couple divorces, they divide the dowry between the families. If a wife is at fault, the bride's family must return the dowry to her husband (Talavera, 2013).

Although the T'boli believe on supreme deities called *D'wata*, they also collectively hold on the belief of the presence of malevolent spirits called *Busao* who are capable of causing misfortunes like illness and death in the family. Animal sacrifices through rituals are offered to appease these evil spirits (Manzano, 2016).

Manzano (2016) further explains that the T'boli's do not regard death as inevitable. On the contrary, they believe that it is just a ploy by a *Busao* or a punishment inflicted by their *D'wata*. Death for them can be reversed through healing rituals. They believe that when they are asleep, their spirits leave their human bodies. If their human bodies are not awakened, their spirits have not returned. Hence, death transpired.

On another hand, when the T'boli violate their customary norms, they offer a white chicken, a pig or a goat cooked without salt on an altar where they believe the *D'wata* lives. This ritual is performed when a person is ill or when a natural calamity strikes such floods or droughts (Casal, 2008).

### *Oral Traditions and Archetypal Criticism*

Matsumoto (1996) defines oral traditions as cognitive patterns of thoughts shared as a collective unconsciousness of a particular indigenous cultural community. Oral traditions mirror norms, beliefs and traditional practices of a cultural community. He notes that pattern of behaviors relating to family and community relationships of a cultural community are manifested as narratives in their oral traditions. To understand, didactic teachings of these

social relationships, oral traditions offer a window to see the worldview of this collective unconsciousness.

Stanley Kunitz, as quoted by Gillespie (2010: p. 1), once said that "Old myths, old gods, old heroes have never died. They are only sleeping at the bottom of our minds, waiting for our call. We have need for them. They represent the wisdom of our race." In oral traditions, an archetype refers to a universal symbol that represents human dreams, desires, beliefs, fears, and sufferings-the wisdom of a race. Archetypal criticism therefore revolves around the identification of these archetypes within an oral tradition. It contends that these archetypes determine the form, meaning and function of a narrative (Chen, 2016). Symbols in the archetypes stimulate peoples' unconsciousness. They recur in the oral traditions dominantly, and their universal meanings are recognized as one common narrative experience (Gillespie, 2010).

Furthermore, Walter Gordon, as quoted by Brown (1970), defines archetypal criticism's main assertion which is that literary expression such as oral traditions are unconscious products of the collective experience of the entire humanity. Critics believe that oral traditions appeal mainly to the human race because of the universality of their meanings in their archetypes. They are widely accepted through generations because their symbolisms reflect the collective core beliefs and values of humanity. These beliefs and values do not just explain the natural world, but they provide guidance on cultural behavior and norms and offer insight into a person's life's milestones such as birth, puberty, marriage and death (Walker, 2002).

Carl Jung, as quoted by Chen (2016), identified common archetypes or recurring images and patterns of human experiences in oral traditions such as: the cycle of birth-death-rebirth, changing seasons, hero or heroine quest, and journey motif. Characterisation of characters are flat either very good or very bad with exaggerated character traits and abilities. The hero or heroine is usually young and courageous, kind, unselfish, and caring.

Soriano (2021) and Azzolina (1987) explain that motifs refer to series of recurring images that have symbolic importance in the folk narrative. The two most common motifs are: hero or heroine's quest which involve a pattern of events such as: the hero begins life in paradise; the hero is alienated from paradise; the hero starts his journey and endures all trials and tribulations; the hero achieves self-realisation; finally, the hero returns to paradise. On the other hand, a journey motif can be a linear or a circular journey. The former entails that a hero moves away from home, encounters challenges or discoveries, and settles in a new home which

is better than the first. Conversely, the latter involves a hero journeying away from home, hurdling adventures, and returning home as a better person.

Themes in oral traditions are universal truths and values that have significance to the culture. Often the tales tell about the consequences of those who do not respect and obey the teaching of a cultural value or practice (Colby, 1963). Conversely, the values in oral traditions are one of these collective patterns of desirable thoughts and behaviors inculcated in the oral traditions and embodied in the traits of the mythical characters, symbolisms of the motifs and the didactic teachings of recurring themes. Therefore, to understand the worldview as expressed in the oral narratives of an indigenous cultural community, the manifested values as expressed in the characters, motifs, and themes must be identified and analysed in an ethnographic study (Walker, 2002).

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

Since the main objective of this study was to analyse the worldview of the T'boli through the values embodied in their oral traditions, ethnography was employed as the design in this study. The epistemological framework of ethnography encompasses beliefs, behavior, and values in the context of a culture, specifically in its oral traditions (Mackenzie, 1994).

Primary data collection and processing in this study, were carried out by the use of Direct Method, Three-Generation Vertical Test and One- Generation Horizontal Spread Test on folklore study, as espoused by Manuel (1980) and by the use of Damiana Eugenio's Philippine Folklore Genre, as espoused by Lindell (1999). Finally, analysis of the oral traditions was framed under Carl Jung's Archetypal Criticism as adopted by Walker (2002).

### *Research Procedures*

The study involved three stages of data collection, namely: the preliminary visit, the primary data collection, and the primary data processing. In the first stage, the researcher sought written permission or free, prior and informed consent from the T'boli's Tribal Council's office in Sta. Cruz Mission. After the permission was granted for the study, the researcher then searched for key informant of the study. Subsequently, the researcher conducted data collection plan meeting with the identified key informant.

In the second stage which involved primary data collection: the researcher, with the assistance of the key informant, searched for informants and conducted In-depth Interview with

them in accordance with Manuel (1980)'s Direct Method for oral traditions collection. The informants were interviewed individually in separate locations. They were asked to share their knowledge of their oral traditions. They were asked to explain the meaning of terms, archaic forms, mythological figures, geographical location, cultural motifs and their functions, when needed. T'boli language was used during the interview. Since the researcher is not conversant in T'boli language, the key informant translated the questions and answers to Ilongo, a Visayan dialect, in which the researcher is proficient on. Upon verification of their substantial knowledge on T'boli's oral traditions, the researcher documented the informants' names, genders, ages and the dates of recording (please see Appendix B), the researcher asked the informants to narrate the stories in their own language (T'boli). The researcher simultaneously recorded the stories using an electronic tape recorder. Finally, the researcher transcribed, immediately after the recording, the stories. To ensure accuracy of the transcription, the transcribed materials were read before the informants themselves in accordance with Manuel (1980) Direct Method. When there were minor variants in plot such as order of events that were observed by the informants, correction of the discrepancies with the concurrence of the informants Transcription was carried out by the key informant and verified by the researcher.

In the third and final stage, the collected primary data were process. A day after each interview, the key informant translated the transcripts of the recordings from T'boli into Ilongo, a Visayan dialect widely spoken and considered as second language of the T'boli. Ilongo is a common spoken language between the key informant and the researcher. The Ilongo transcripts were subsequently translated into English by the researcher, and the translation was reviewed by a third-party grammar reviewer commissioned by the researcher in the Sta. Cruz Mission Cultural Office. This protocol was put in place to cross-check and validate the researcher's translation and to ensure integrity and authenticity of the folk narratives.

Finally, the researcher conducted a Three-Generation Vertical Test, in accordance with Manuel (1980) Direct Method. The test is necessary to determine authenticity of the oral narratives. To pass the Three-Generation Vertical Test, an oral narrative must be substantially known by majority of informants in each generation. Majority means a minimum of one informant in each generation must have sufficient knowledge of an oral narrative. Sufficient knowledge means that an informant in one generation has inherited knowledge of the characters, the setting, and the thematic elements, including the didactic teaching of a story. Minor deviants in the plot such as sequence of events of a story is tolerable but is required to undergo the One-Generation Horizontal Spread Test to ascertain if the minor deviations are within a particular generation. To pass the second test, substantial variants must be shared by

both informants within a generation. Hence, even if there are variances in a folk narrative, it would still qualify as an authentic oral tradition provided that its variances are a common or shared knowledge by the informants of a particular generation. Consequently, of the total (30) narratives collected, only eleven (11) were ascertained to be authentic or were known substantially by all the informants in Three-Generation Vertical Test and One-Generation Horizontal Spread Test.

Upon completion of data collection, the researcher codified the transcripts of the authentic oral narratives using *QDA MinerLite*, a qualitative data processing software. The narratives were classified according to genre of Philippine folklore, as categorized by Damiana Eugenio (Lindell, 1999). Finally, the character traits, symbolisms of motifs, recurring themes of the oral narratives guided by Archetypal Criticism framework as espoused by Walker (2002) were analysed to serve the purpose of the study.

#### *Sampling Design: The Key Informant*

The role of the key informant is primarily to assist the researcher in the following data collection activities:

1. search and selection of informants;
2. transcribe the recorded oral traditions;
3. read before the informants the transcript and corrected if required the minor variants in the plots with the concurrence of the informants.
4. translate the transcript into *Ilongo* dialect.

The key informant was identified and recommended by the T'boli Tribal Council Office of the Sta. Cruz Mission.

#### *Sampling Design: The Informants*

In selecting the informants for this study, purposive sampling was employed. With the assistance of the key informant, prospective informants were screened based on the following criteria:

1. a T'boli;
2. a good standing member/leader/elder of the tribal community;

3. 25 years old or older;
4. has substantial knowledge of T'boli's oral traditions/literature.

In order to verify authenticity of the oral literature, the three (3)- generation vertical sampling, as espoused by Manuel (1980), was established. The three (3)- generation vertical groups were categorized using the following age range:

First Generation: 60-75 years old

Second Generation: 40-59 years old

Third Generation: 25-39 years old

A total of six (6) informants were identified in this study. Each generation is represented by two informants for the purpose of one-generation horizontal spread test or to establish communal knowledge of the narratives within a particular generation. Please see Appendix B.

#### *Research Locale and Duration*

The cultural community of the T'boli is in Lake Sebu, one of the upper valley towns of the Province of South Cotabato, the Philippines. It has an elevation of approximately 3,000 feet above sea level. Its average annual rainfall volume is 2612 mm. It is situated 264 kilometers southwest of Davao City. By land, the site can be reached in 5 hours and 35 minutes via the Davao-Gen. Santos-Koronadal-Surallah route. The municipality of Lake Sebu has a total of nineteen (19) *barangays* or villages. Data collection, however, covered only three barangays. These are Poblacion, Lamlanak and Lake Seloton. Preliminary visit to the site was on 15 May 2019 while collection of primary data commenced from the first week of June 2019 until the last week of July 2019. The establishment of Sta. Cruz Mission Cultural Office in the locale had facilitated and extended assistance to data collection and processing of this study.

#### *Research Scope and Delimitation*

The study covered the critical analysis of authentic T'boli's oral traditions collected in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, the Philippines. It included eleven (11) folk narratives, namely: six (6) legends, four (4) folktales, and one (1) myth. The study of T'boli's epic *Tudbulol* was not covered in this study. The sub-categories of legends covered in this study are: 3 (three) etiological legends, and 3 (three) non-etiological legends.

### **The T'boli Oral Traditions**

### *Legends*

As defined by Jason (1971), a legend is a genre in folklore that consists of narratives about persons, places and events perceived and believed by a cultural community as part of their human history. It has two kinds: etiological tales which recount the origin of something; and non-etiological tales which tell about supernatural phenomena. In this study, six (6) legends were collected. Three (3) are etiological while the other three (3) are non-etiological. Please see Appendix A.

The etiological legends are: "Origin of Lake Sebu" which tells of a heroic act of a man who saves his wife and young children from a catastrophic flood. "Origin of Lake S'loton" recounts how a woman's generosity leads to the creation of a spring water which grew and transformed into a lake. "Te-ada Island" manifests the generosity of a *D'wata*, god or goddess of nature, in the creation of Te-ada island where the bereaved T'boli family bury their dead.

On the other hand, the non-etiological legends are:.. "Dyali and Ukuy" which tells of an incidence of wife snatching and the importance of the cultural practice of giving back the dowry to the aggrieved husband. "S'bulung" recounts the significance of appeasing the *D'wata* to cure sickness. "S'fu" also narrates the importance of a ritual which offers farm produce to the *D'wata* during harvest season and sharing this produce to their neighbors as well.

### *Folktales*

Dawkins (1951) defines a folktale is traditional oral narrative about unusual or extraordinary tale of mainly animal characters. Folktale preserves, nurtures, and propagates desirable human values of a cultural community. Hence, it usually carries a didactic teaching in its theme. In this study, four (4) folktales were collected. Please see Appendix A.

"The Monkey and the Betel Bird" tells of a story of a jealous and an arrogant monkey who later regretted the fatal consequence of his selfish action. "The Python" recounts how the most venomous snake selflessly shared his venom with other snake species so that they can altogether establish a strong tribe in the forest.

"The Carabao and the Monkey" describes how the monkey is meted with a punishment because of disrespect and disobedience to the authority of *Bong Datu*, the village chieftain. "Ulem, the Rooster" portrays a cunning husband who consequently suffered from the tragic consequence of his human greed.

### *Myth*

Finally, as defined by Jason (1971), a myth is narrative which features movement supernatural forces that cause occurrence of cosmological phenomena. In this study, one (1) myth was collected. "Story of the Sky" is a story about how people treat the sky harshly and how it moves away from people during the ancient days. Please see Appendix A.

## **Results and Discussions**

### *Character Traits*

Table 1 shows prominent mythical characters and their traits in T'boli's oral traditions. All the characters are found in T'boli legends. They display depth in personality in terms of T'boli's identity. However, almost all of them are static or they remain unchanged in the narratives, except *S'fu* who experiences self-realisation which stimulates change in his character trait.

**Table 1**

**Traits of Mythical Characters**

| <i>Oral Tradition</i> | <i>Title</i>           | <i>Character</i> | <i>Traits</i>                |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Legend                | Origin of Lake Sebu    | <i>S'bu</i>      | industrious, helpful, heroic |
|                       | Origin of Lake Seloton | <i>S'loton</i>   | Generous                     |
|                       | <i>S'bulung</i>        | <i>S'bulung</i>  | Faithful                     |
|                       | <i>S'fu</i>            | <i>S'fu</i>      | faithful; generous           |

Table 2 displays the most common mythical character traits observed in the oral traditions collected are being faithful to the deity at 8.6% and being generous at 5.7 % frequency rates respectively. These findings confirm the observation of Manzano (2016) of her

characterisation of the T'boli's society which is a tribal community and whose social relationship is governed mainly by their religious belief that good deeds are rewarded.

**Table 2****Matrix of T'boli Mythical Character Traits, Motifs, Themes and Values**

|                                    | Count | % Codes | Cases | % Cases |
|------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|
| <b>Mythical Character's Traits</b> |       |         |       |         |
| ● Faithful                         | 3     | 8.6%    | 2     | 18.2%   |
| ● Generous                         | 2     | 5.7%    | 2     | 18.2%   |
| ● Heroic                           | 1     | 2.9%    | 1     | 9.1%    |
| <b>Motifs</b>                      |       |         |       |         |
| ● D'wata/Bathala                   | 3     | 8.6%    | 3     | 27.3%   |
| ● Water                            | 2     | 5.7%    | 2     | 18.2%   |
| ● Owong                            | 1     | 2.9%    | 1     | 9.1%    |
| ● Dowry                            | 1     | 2.9%    | 1     | 9.1%    |
| ● T'nalak                          | 1     | 2.9%    | 1     | 9.1%    |
| ● Datu                             | 1     | 2.9%    | 1     | 9.1%    |
| <b>Themes</b>                      |       |         |       |         |
| ● Altruism                         | 3     | 8.6%    | 3     | 27.3%   |
| ● Devotion                         | 4     | 11.4%   | 4     | 36.4%   |
| ● Deference                        | 2     | 5.7%    | 2     | 18.2%   |
| ● Humility                         | 1     | 2.9%    | 1     | 9.1%    |
| ● Greediness                       | 1     | 2.9%    | 1     | 9.1%    |
| <b>Values</b>                      |       |         |       |         |
| ● Religious                        | 3     | 8.6%    | 3     | 27.3%   |
| ● Human                            | 4     | 11.4%   | 4     | 36.4%   |
| ● Cultural                         | 2     | 5.7%    | 2     | 18.2%   |

In the legend "Origin of Lake Sebu", *S'bu* epitomises the T'boli's patriarchal society. Although *S'bu* does not possess supernatural strength typical of a legendary hero, his character defines categorically the role of T'boli men as heads of T'boli's households. These patriarchal roles include the responsibility of providing for the needs of the family and the heroic duty to protect the family and the tribe from all dangers and harm.

Another trait is observed in the legends of Lake *S'loton* and *S'fu*. Both characters demonstrate a desirable human trait because of their willingness to share their resources to other people in their community who are in dire need. *S'loton* directs people to the place where she finds the spring water. On the other hand, *S'fu* distributes portion of his farm produce to his neighbors after a bountiful harvest. Furthermore, the characters of *S'bulong* and *S'fu* portray T'boli's religious belief of faithfulness on a deity who governs their natural environment. *S'bulong* appeases the *D'wata* with food offering and sacrifices to heal his sick child. Similarly, *S'fu* offers his farm produce as offering in the ritual during the harvest season as a form of thanksgiving. These manifested traits of the mythical characters, as elucidated in Carl Jung's "collective unconscious" theory, mirror the religious values and the social dimension of the T'boli's faith by which the norm of their human relationships is drawn.

### *Motifs and their Symbolisms*

Table 3 presents the prominent motifs and their contextual symbolism in T'boli's oral traditions.

**Table 3**

### **Motifs and Symbolisms**

|        | <i>Oral Tradition</i>  | <i>Title</i>        | <i>Motif</i> | <i>Symbolism</i>                      |
|--------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Legend | Origin of Lake Sebu    |                     | Water        | cleansing/purification                |
|        | Origin of Lake Seloton |                     | Water        | Life                                  |
|        | T'e-ada Island         | <i>Owong</i> (boat) |              | journey to immortality                |
|        | Dyali and Ukuy         | Dowry               |              | acceptance; forgiveness               |
|        | S'bulung               | <i>D'wata</i>       |              | supreme being; healing god or goddess |

|          |                    |                         |                            |
|----------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
|          | S'fu               | D'wata                  | supreme being; farm god    |
| Folktale | Carabao and Monkey | Datu                    | cultural leader; authority |
|          | Ulem, the Rooster  | T'nalak<br>(embroidery) | inner consciousness        |
| Myth     | Story of the Sky   | Bathala                 | supreme being; creator god |

As shown on Table 2, the two (2) most distinguishing motifs in the T'boli oral traditions are a deity at 8.65% and a body of water at 5.7% frequency rates respectively. These reinforce the findings of Talavera (2013) in her study of T'boli's cultural community. This characterises T'boli's religious belief which is mainly contextualised by the bodies of water that surround the T'boli's cultural community.

The motif of a *D'wata* or a deity is seen as a controlling image in the legends of *S'bulung* and *S'fu*. In *S'bulung*, the concept of *D'wata* as the god and goddess of healing is revealed. Moreover, the concept of *D'wata* as the supreme provider unfolds when *S'fu* performs harvest thanksgiving ritual to appease the angry god. Finally, the Story of the Sky postulates the idea of a *Bathala*, who is the creator of the Earth and its sky-the cosmos.

The universal motif of water that symbolises purification or cleansing of the human race as death motif is exhibited in the legend of Origin of Lake Sebu. In the legend, a catastrophic flood ensues wiping out the entire village including *S'bu* who died while attempting to rescue his wife and young children. Conversely, the universal motif of water also reveals a contrasting symbolism in the form of life-giving motif. This is shown in the legend of Origin of Lake Seloton. In the legend, the generosity of *S'loton* who shares to her community her knowledge of where a spring water can be found after her long circular journey leads to the creation of a lake which eventually serves the water requirements of the people and the community. These distinctive motifs of the T'boli's oral traditions, as argued by Walker (2002), reflect dominantly their religious values along with compelling aspects of their cultural consciousness and identity as a tribe that acknowledges the divine authority of deities and the moral authority of a *Bong Datu*.

*Recurring Themes and their Didactic Teachings*

Table 4 presents the recurring themes and their didactic teachings in T'boli's oral traditions.

**Table 4**

**Themes and Didactic Teachings**

| <i>Oral Tradition</i> | <i>Title</i>           | <i>Theme</i> | <i>Didactic Teaching</i>                                  |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|---|
| Legend                | Origin of Lake Sebu    | Altruism     | unselfish act is honorable                                |
|                       | Origin of Lake Seloton | Altruism     | generosity is rewarded                                    |
|                       | T'e-ada Island         | Devotion     | faithfulness to a deity is rewarded                       |
|                       | Dyali and Ukuy         | Deference    | disrespect or disobedience to a cultural norm is punished |
|                       | S'bulung               | Devotion     | faithfulness to a deity is rewarded                       |
|                       | S'fu                   | Devotion     | faithfulness to a deity is rewarded                       |
| Folktale              | Monkey and Betel Bird  | Humility     | jealousy and arrogance are undesirable traits             |

|      |                    |            |  |
|------|--------------------|------------|--|
|      |                    |            |  |
|      | The Python         | Altruism   | generosity is rewarded   |
|      | Carabao and Monkey | Deference  | disrespect or<br>disobedience to a<br>cultural norm is<br>punished |
|      | Ulem, the Rooster  | Greediness | gluttony and dishonesty<br>have undesirable<br>consequences        |
| Myth | Story of the Sky   | Devotion   | disobedience to a deity is<br>punished                             |

As shown on Table 2, the most eminent themes in the oral traditions are altruism at 8.6% , devotion at 11.4% and deference at 5.7% frequency rates respectively. This supports the findings of Talavera (2013) in her study of T'boli's oral literature which affirms the social dimension of T'boli's religious beliefs.

Altruism or the theme of unselfish or generous act of serving for the well-being of others are manifested in three (3) T'boli oral traditions. In the legend of Origin of Lake Sebu, selfless heroic act is celebrated. Correspondingly, in the legend of Origin of Lake Seloton and the folktale of The Python, the human value of generosity is rewarded. *S'luton*'s generosity leads to the creation of a lake which serves as a source that provides for water and food resources of the community. In the same manner, the python's act of sharing his lethal venom to other snakes make the python non-venomous, but the snake species becomes one of the strongest reptiles in the forest.

Devotion or the theme of faithfulness to a deity is portrayed in four (4) T'boli oral narratives. In the legends of Te-ada Island, *S'bulung*, and *S'fu*, faithfulness to *D'wata* is rewarded by the creation of a burial ground, recuperation from sickness and bountiful harvest respectively. Moreover, deference or the theme of respect and obedience to the established cultural norm and authority is demonstrated in the two (2) T'boli stories. The legend of Dyali and Ukuy and the folktale The Carabao and the Monkey exhibited this theme. However, both

### Looking From a Window: A Critical Analysis of the T'boli's Worldview Through their Oral Traditions

narratives exhibit deviant behavior. For instance, *Dyali* snatches *Ukuy* from her husband. *Dyali*; however, is unable to return the dowry back to *Ukuy*'s husband which is a customary T'boli practice when a wife is taken away from her husband. As a consequence, when the deadline to pay off the dowry has lapsed and no payment is made, *Dyali* and *Ukuy* are executed by the family of the disgruntled husband.

Another portrayal of this deviant behavior is seen in the character of a monkey in the folktale The Carabao and The Monkey. The monkey mocks and defies the cultural authority of a *Bong Datu*. As consequence, the monkey is forbidden from stepping on the land. The monkey ends up hanging in the branches of the trees for life. These recurring themes and their didactic teachings, as explicated by Matsumoto (1996), reveal substantially the T'boli's religious values in the context of their socio-cultural domains from which norm of religious practices, human conduct and their worldview is drawn on.

#### *Values and Worldview*

Values are set of core beliefs and practices that influence human behavior and decision. They determine how a person ought to behave in order to make him or her desirable (Piyasa, 2018). On another hand, worldview is a framework by which a reality is interpreted by a person's perspective or outlook of life (Ali Saleem, 2019). As shown on Table 2, T'boli's oral traditions embody sets of values, namely: religious, human, and cultural values that shaped how they see the world around them.

As seen, the T'boli's oral traditions have rich thematic element of religious values, which may be through generations, have been collectively and unconsciously embedded in their oral traditions. This set of values refers to the beliefs and worship practices of divine and supreme beings. It is manifested by devotion or love, faith, obedience, humility, trust and hope to divine spirits. Religious values are important because they guide individual and social action and behavior (Ali Saleem, 2019). Moreover, they regulate societal or cultural norms and in some societies they become a way of life (Iyer, 2018).

For instance, in T'boli's oral traditions, the belief and devotion to a *D'wata* and the practices of rituals and offerings to a deity are portrayed in the legends of *S'bulong* and *S'fu*. Both characters appease the *D'wata* with food offering and sacrifices in exchange of a divine intervention. In *S'bulong*, the belief of *D'wata* as the god and goddess of healing is revealed. On the other hand, the faith entrusted to *D'wata* as the supreme provider is demonstrated when *S'fu* offers his harvest to appease the angry god. Finally, in the myth *Story of the Sky* the belief

of a *Bathala*, who is the supreme creator, is established. Religious values imply that one's devotion to a deity is always rewarded.

Another embodiment that is evidently formed collectively and unconsciously in T'boli's oral traditions are human values. This set of values refers to the principles of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships of human conduct in a society. It is understanding and discerning what is right from what is wrong. Human values are manifested by altruism or respect, reverence, compassion, empathy, reconciliation and gratitude with fellow men. Human values regulate human conduct such as seeking peace and peaceful co-existence, and promoting truth and discipline (Piyasa, 2018).

This is observed in T'boli's oral traditions in which the practice of generosity and sense of community are seen in the legends of *S'loton* and *S'fu*. Both characters demonstrated their generosity or selfishness when they shared their resources to other people in their community who are in dire need. In the legend, *S'loton* after a long journey found a spring water and shared her knowledge to the community, and this leads to the creation of a lake which eventually provides for the water requirements of the community. On the other hand, *S'fu* gives out to his neighbors his farm produce even after he suffered a great loss from a disastrous flood.

Finally, to establish T'boli's distinct tribal identity, cultural values are personified in their oral traditions for generations to assimilate their way of life. This set of values refer to the shared beliefs and practices of traditions, customs, norms that are enforced to maintain social order and cooperation in a community. Cultural values define the character of a culture. They prescribed the standard rules of conduct for social life in the cultural community. These rules are handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth (Pedersen, et. al, 2002).

To illustrate this, in T'boli's oral traditions, the consequences of disrespect or disobedience to the authority of a *Datu* is demonstrated the legend of *Dyali* and *Ukuy* and the folktale The Carabao and the Monkey. For instance, when *Dyali* is unable to return the dowry back to *Ukuy*'s husband, which is a customary T'boli practice when a wife is taken away from her husband, he was executed by the family of the disgruntled husband, as a consequence. Similarly, when the monkey mocks and defies the orders of a *Bong Datu*, the monkey is forbidden from stepping on the land. The monkey ends up hanging in the branches of the trees for life, as a punishment.

#### *The T'boli's Worldview*

Therefore, it can be gleaned from the T'boli's values that they see their world as a dynamic space where cosmic and earthly forces converge. This convergence frames the core of how they view and relate to their physical world. Attitudes, beliefs, practices and norms have been formed in congruence to their "collective unconscious" interpretation of reality of their physical realm as manifested in the character traits, motifs, and themes of their oral traditions (Walker, 2002; Casal, 2008; Chen, 2016). Hence, it can be inferred that the T'boli's worldview is primarily shaped by their religious values. These values subsequently influence their social behaviors and cultural practices. It is worth noting that T'boli's perspective of the world creates the social dimension of T'boli's faith. For instance, *S'fu* realizes that genuine devotion to a *D'wata* cannot be perfected unless there is charity and fellowship.

As a religious community, the T'boli values devotion to their *D'wata* and *Bathala* or their faithfulness to a deity as ideal value that can provide and sustain their needs for food, health, prosperity and protection. Thus, this precipitates to their cultural community where the T'boli values altruism or unselfish act of serving other for the greater good of the community. It is a way of life that enables them to attain peaceful co-existence with their fellowmen. Finally, the T'boli's deference or respect and obedience to the established cultural authority of the *Datu* and other customary norms such dowry are honored to maintain social order and harmony in their society.

## **Conclusions**

This study sought to analyse, utilising Archetypal Criticism, a collective worldview through the values embodied in the oral traditions of the T'boli. Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

The T'boli's oral traditions include, but not limited to, legends, folktales and myths. The most common traits of T'boli's mythical characters are personified by being faithful and being generous. This explains why the prominent motifs in T'boli's oral traditions are the controlling imageries of a deity and a body of water. The contextual symbolism of a deity is the presence of supreme beings, while water is an agent of purification and as a sustainer of life. Moreover, the recurring didactic teachings in the themes of T'boli's oral traditions are devotion, altruism, and deference. These teachings have facilitated the assimilation of faithfulness as a religious value, generosity as a human value and respect and obedience to authority as cultural values personified in their oral traditions. Ultimately, these "collective unconscious" values form the T'boli's worldview in terms of their cultural and religious practices and traditions. This study recommends that a similar study be conducted to confirm both the T'boli's worldview and

values in their celebrated epic, *Tudbulol* which is not covered in this investigation. Furthermore, the conceptual framework espoused in this study can be utilised for parallel studies investigating the oral folk narratives of other indigenous cultural communities.

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**Looking From a Window: A Critical Analysis of the T'boli's Worldview Through their Oral Traditions**

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