


Chapter 3

Understanding Indigenous Values Embedded in Oral Traditions

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyses a collective worldview through the values embodied in the oral traditions of the T'boli, an indigenous tribe in Lake Sebu, the Philippines. Utilizing the 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 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.

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

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 (Eneche, 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 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?

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