

# Delineating the [D/J]iwa:

## Dissection of selected Filipino and Indonesian folktales

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**Abstract**—With the focus of folkloric texts as a reflection of its represented cultural identity, this paper patented Filipino and Indonesian folktales through archetypal analysis in arriving towards a structured cultural identity between the two. In portraying the psyche of the indicated countries, the researcher engaged in an indepth content analysis of gathered and selected textual materials with the threefold synthesis of cultural definitions namely experience lived, interpreted, and defined. Discussions on the selected patterns of the folktales, projected tenets of the psyche, and its manifestations resulted to the delineation of the shared psyche. The folktales highlighted communal relations through intrapersonal adjustments. Tenets on offering, encapsulation, reciprocation, synergy, and chrysalis were essentially interwoven across the cultures and manifestations, to which the researcher further indicated recommendations on extended studies and applications of the portrayals of Filipino and Indonesian Psyche.

**Keywords**—cultural identity, Philippine folktales; Indonesian folktales; psyche; mindset; archetypes

### I. INTRODUCTION

In analyzing cultural patterns, several literary studies made use of folkloric texts and their corresponding archetypes [1] to further investigate how the nature of tradition would help in the forming of cultural identity [2,3]. Geared towards one of the lenses of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025, developing a “dynamic and harmonious community that is aware and proud of its identity, culture, and heritage”, this study celebrates and cerebrates the Filipino-Indonesian relationship as members of the ASEAN through a folkloric analysis of their cultural patterns as these are deemed connected beyond the geographical and the historical contexts.

Folkloric archetypes, with their inborn tendencies to influence human behavior and personalities, are essential in establishing the cultural grounds. The scaffolding of the regional culture needs to take into account, however, the smallest unit of the given community—the self; more importantly, the soul or the psyche. Since this metaphysical structure is deemed as the foundation of the worldview and would consequently manifest itself in the form of macroscopic viewpoints: the theoretical nature of the psyche towards its practices.

Evident through related literature, several studies focus on the dissection of the souls in understanding further the cultural identity of the nation: the Filipino psyche or “Diwa” [4,5] and the Indonesian psyche or “Jiwa” [6,7]. However, a gap is seen in considering the bonds of the two countries in the premise of arriving towards a significant cultural common ground. With this intent, the researcher synthesized the archetypes in the Filipino and Indonesian folk tales and thus subsequently portraying the [D/J]iwa and its detailed characteristics.

### A. Statement of the Purpose

This research paper aims to provide answers to the following questions:

- What patterns could be seen in the plot of the selected folktales?
- What are the traits and tenets in the Filipino-Indonesian psyche?
- What common values and physical manifestations do the tenets of the [D/J]iwa resonate with?

### II. METHODOLOGY

This study used content analysis to dissect the qualitative data as it conducted a literature method. This non-contact method interpreted and coded textual materials (the Philippine and Indonesian folktales) gathered and selected through examining journals, periodicals, and anthologies, as well as consulting with literary and cultural scholars [8]. Literature methodology aims to arrive towards the essential attribute of materials as it fundamentally adheres to the context that literary texts “have important values for the development of human society, history, culture and research scholars” [9].

Filipino folk tales that were selected include “Hinilawod” [10], “Aponibolinayen and the Sun”, and “Bantugan” [11] from the gathered sources. “Arjuna Wiwaha”, “Jaka Tarub and the Seven Apsaras”, and “Keong Emas” represented the Indonesian folk tales, concurrently [12,13].

In analyzing the selected folktales, the study implemented a theoretical framework adapted from one of Stuart Hall’s views on cultural identity, as he stated how common cultural codes and historical experiences would be able to provide “one-shared culture”. He further expounded how the cultural identity

(in this study’s case, the *psyche* or [D/J]iwa) is “experience lived, experience interpreted, and experience defined” [14].

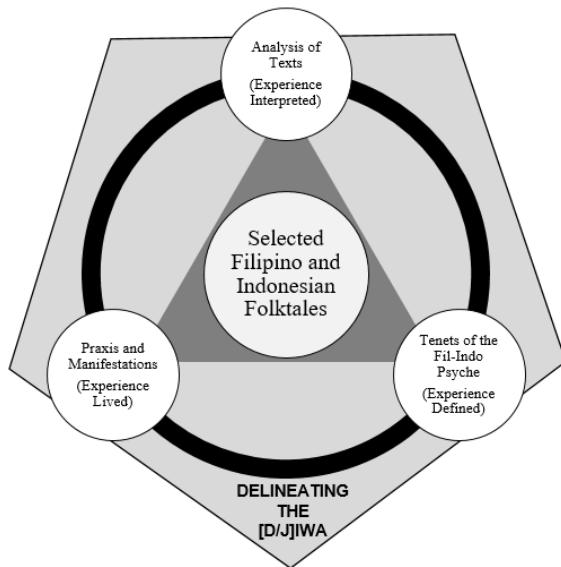


Fig. 1. Framework for delineating the [D/J]iwa or the Filipino-Indonesian psyche through selected folktales.

### III. DISCUSSIONS

#### A. What Patterns Could be Seen in the Plot of the Selected Folktales?

Culture has a series of patterns and images as may be portrayed through concrete artistic representations. Through these patterns and images, the cultural experience may be interpreted, since the understanding of culture is always depicted as a structure of meanings in which actions are continually translated into signs.

TABLE I. ELABORATION OF THE PATTERNS SEEN IN THE SELECTED FOLK TALES

Filipino Folk Tales	Indonesian Folk Tales
Character/s performed rituals for divine intervention	Character/s cleansed self
Character/s utilized enchanted objects	Character/s underwent hermitage
Character/s received cosmic consequence for action	Character/s utilized enchanted objects
Character/s returned kind gesture	Character/s received cosmic consequence for action
Character/s highlighted value of kinship.	Character/s returned kind gesture
Character/s displayed need for communal assistance	Character/s highlighted value of kinship.
Character/s changed physical form	Character/s displayed need for communal assistance
Character/s hid the nature of their power	Character/s changed physical form
	Character/s hid the nature of their power

In this sense, the selected folk tales from the Philippines and Indonesia would require an in-depth analysis of patterns and images [15] to clearly and accurately portray the experience of the [D/J]iwa and to consequently portray a foundation for the shared cultural identity [16].

It was taken into account that through the analysis of patterns between the artistic representations of folk tales, Filipino and Indonesian stories predominantly share the premise of the following:

All of the folk tales have explored the use of enchanted or magical objects to do a task despite the variations of their use (household chores in Aponibolinayan and the Sun, and Jaka Tarub, or battling in Hinilawod, Bantugan, Arjuna, and Keong Emas).

The selected stories also shared the pattern of actions and counteractions. It was highlighted how a gesture is measured according to its motive, whether for the good or the bad. Alongside it as well would be the consequences introduced either by the cosmos or the community.

Kinship and social relations were also displayed in the given folktales as the main characters required interventions in order to accomplish tasks in the stories.

It was also common how characters adapted to situations in the plot either through physical transformation or the hiding the nature of their power.

Despite variations between the purification or cleansing the self (which is predominantly seen in the Indonesian contexts) and the performance of rituals for divine intervention (as apparently included in the Filipino contexts), it is essential to see the connection on how both would underline the act of offering towards a higher purpose.

#### B. What are the Projected Traits and Tenets in the Filipino-Indonesian Psyche?

As supported by the context of the Volkgeist [17], each region is characterized by its own unique spirit. Resource [18] introduced culture as “experience-defined” through the manifestation of actual codes that would explicate traits shaped by ancestral history, the experience of a specific physical environment, and language, law, literature, religion, the arts, and customs as provided by earlier generations. These codes would provide a stable frame of reference towards a unified sense of defined meaning.

With this at hand, the patterns or the codes taken from the interpreted experiences of the folk tales are needed to be further synthesized to arrive at a defined frame—the tenets of the Filipino-Indonesian psyche, better known as the [D/J]iwa.

Through rituals performed, self-cleansing and undergoing hermitage, the Filipino-Indonesian psyche displayed traits of M[e/a]nawari (*offering*). In this sense, the manawari focuses more on the extension of offering the self through purification of the self, whereas the manawari highlights services undergone for prayers coming true.

Enchanted objects as exhibited in the folk tales projected the [D/J]iwa’s characteristic of *encapsulation* or a[z/g]imat

wherein both the Indonesian (azimat) and Filipino (agimat) terms would signify how the power of a psyche, can be contained in an object for concretization, preservation, and for transference.

Constructs on actions and counteractions would be associated with the Filipino and Indonesian aspects of *reciprocity* wherein the value of the psyche must be properly equated, hence T[i/a]mbal Balik.

Angka[ta]n or synergy stemmed from both kinship and communal relations. The [D/J]iwa traces how its value is transferred from generation to generation (angkan) and how an individual is inherently part of a wider structure (angkatan).

Perhaps distinctive among the Filipino-Indonesian psyche would be the synthesis of concealment of power and the transforming of the self in order to adapt and survive from the environment. Herein, the term Sar[o/u]ng (*chrysalis*) was used to indicate both the concealment and the metamorphosis of the individual for communal adjustment.

TABLE II. SYNTHESIS OF THE PORTRAYED TENETS OF THE FILIPINO-INDONESIAN [D/J]IWA

Evident Patterns from Folktales	Tenets of the [D/J]iwa
Character/s performed rituals for divine intervention	Offering M[e/a]nawari
Character/s cleansed self	
Character/s underwent hermitage	Encapsulation A[z/g]imat
Character/s utilized enchanted objects	
Character/s received cosmic consequence for action	Reciprocation T[a/i]mbal Balik
Character/s returned kind gesture	
Character/s highlighted value of kin	Synergy Angka[ta]n
Character/s displayed need for communal assistance	
Character/s changed physical form	Chrysalis
Character/s hid the nature of their power	Sar[o/u]ng

C. What common Values and Physical Manifestations Do the Tenets of the [D/J]iwa Resonate with?

Accounts and impressions of living as a member of a group have been discussed as vital in understanding the culture [19]. Through experiences lived, practices embodied by the group of people would concretize a region’s cultural identity. Herein, the researcher acknowledged the pertinence of cultural praxis as with establishing applications for the theories surfaced from the [D/J]iwa [20].

In the context of the M[e/a]nawari, it is evident as to how the aspect of offering could be associated with the values and manifestations of the Filipino *Bahala na mentality* and the Indonesian *Sumarah*. In the Philippine culture, this could be situated with how the people would exhibit resignation towards the higher being. Mostly translated as ‘fatalism’, the Filipino psychology of the *Bahala na mentality* is however taken as a positive trait for the Filipinos as the ability to actually face uncertain phenomena or circumstances in front of them [21]. Indonesian *Sumarah* has a relative praxis with the concept of total surrender through *sujud* or meditation to be under the function of God’s will [22]. Both aspects of offering would reflect the [D/J]iwa’s tenet on surrendering the self and the

individual’s situation as both would understand that they are not able to control some circumstances.

Included in the tenet of the A[z/g]imat, although simplistic, would be the Filipino praxis of the *pasalubong* or in the Indonesian context-- *Kenang kenangan* or *Tanda mata*. Despite its initially mundane nature, the Filipino *pasalubong* or tradition of bringing home gifts or tokens has a vital impact towards the cultural value of the people. Ethnicgroupsphilippines.com described the custom as a reflection of the Filipino nature of being hospitable and thoughtful for the others [23]. The *kenang kenangan* or *Tanda Mata* has the relative context. Social conventions recognize the act of souvenir-giving as a representation for the formation of relationships between people [24]. Encapsulation is associated in such a way through how the [D/J]iwa, be it as an individual or as a group of people, may be represented through an item which is then transferred to the ‘other’ as a symbol of a connection established.

Reciprocation or the T[a/i]mbal Balik would project a praxis on the Filipino *utang na loob* and the Indonesian *Karmaphala*. Gratitude as given conceptually by the Filipino *utang na loob* has been characterized according to the aspects of acknowledgement, weighing/reciprocity, and social responsibility [25]. *Karmaphala*, as acknowledged by the Indonesian mindset from its loose translation of “fruits of actions”, is a more cosmic insight towards results of actions undertaken by a person. Herein, the [D/J]iwa is seen as similar to debts payable through experiences received by the person through accumulated actions over several lifetimes [26].

TABLE III. PRESENTATION OF THE COMMON VALUES AND PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS FROM THE [D/J]IWA

Tenets of the [D/J]iwa	Values and Manifestations	
	Philippines	Indonesia
M[e/a]nawari (Offering)	Bahala na mentality	Sumarah
A[z/g]imat (Encapsulation)	Pasalubong	Kenang-kenangan/ Tanda mata
T[a/i]mbal Balik (Reciprocation)	Utang na Loob	Karmaphala
Angka[ta]n (Synergy)	Lahi/Bayanihan	Kaum
Sar[o/u]ng (Chrysalis)	Hiya/Pakikiramdam	Malu

Praxis on synergy or Angka[ta]n would include the Filipino *Lahi* and *Bayanihan* along with the Indonesian *Kaum*. Filipinos, like most of the other Asians acknowledge the concept of filial piety as understood by the concept of *lahi* and *bayanihan* which is not just acknowledged through blood-relations but with the idea of nationality. *Kaum* is a loose translation of ‘clan’ from Bahasa Indonesia. It was highlighted how family is a vital unit of the Indonesian culture and that the elderly are seen as people highly respected due to responsibilities undertaken for the younger generation by one resource [27]. Communal relations are also fundamental in building the nation as reflected in the terminology “Bhineka Tunggal Ika” wherein Indonesia is known as a united country despite of the diversity of the people [28].

Customs on adapting to social situations and concealment of the [D/J]iwa through chrysalis or the Sar[o/u]ng are

manifested through the Filipino *Hiya/Pakikiramdam* and the Indonesian *Malu*. Both resonate the concept of ‘beating around the bush’ or the withholding of a direct verbal confrontation with the notion that it might ‘embarrass’ the person or the other [21,29]. Such relational sensitivity is an aspect of the [D/J]iwa through its projection of controlling and restraining the selfish desires for the welfare of the others.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Patterns between Filipino and Indonesian folk tales fundamentally projected a collectivist set of relations in which the characters’ motives are geared towards interpersonal connections. With such motivations, it was observed how the characters adjusted the self to gain the assurance of the ‘community’ and the ‘cosmos’.

Through the expounded patterns developed from the folk tales, five tenets of the [D/J]iwa were established. M[e/a]nawari (offering) situates the extension of the self through purification and conducting of rituals and celebrations for attaining yearnings. Containment of the psyche is imperative for concretization, preservation, and transference through the A[z/g]imat (encapsulation). Actions are consequently equated and sometimes even overcompensated through T[i/a]mbal Balik (reciprocation). Interpersonal connections are vital for the survival of the psyche as described by the Angka[ta]n. Adaptation and concealment of the [D/J]iwa heighten its survival and self-preservation through the Sar[o/u]ng (chrysalis).

As the individual’s connection with the community and the cosmos is fundamental for the [D/J]iwa, much of the manifestations of the aforementioned tenets are driven towards the adjustment of the context of the ‘self’. This has been evident through the practices of the *Bahala na Mentality*, and the *Sumarah* for the M[e/a]nawari; *Pasalubong, Kenang Kenangan / Tanda Mata* for the A[z/g]imat; *Utang na Loob* and *Karmaphala* for the T[i/a]mbal Balik; *Lahi/Bayanihan* and *Kaum* for the Angka[ta]n; and *Hiya/Pakikiramdam* and *Malu* for Sar[o/u]ng.

For possible recommendations, the researcher would want to utilize the established characteristics of the [D/J]iwa in further tracing the unified identity of the ASEAN members. With this in hand, it is necessary for the future studies to include other folk tales for the other ASEAN members, not only limited to the Filipino and the Indonesian contexts. With the defined ASEAN psyche, it will now be more manageable to establish a common ground between the nations through cultural connections and will secure a more profound branding for the regional identity through cultural homogeneity.

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