

Article

Not peer-reviewed version

---

# Illuminating Shadows: Decoding Three Mythological Veil of Mindanao's Cultural Tapestry

---

[Edgar R. Eslit](#) \*

Posted Date: 20 June 2023

doi: 10.20944/preprints202306.1412.v1

Keywords: decoding mythological veil; illuminating shadows; Mindanao's cultural tapestry



Preprints.org is a free multidiscipline platform providing preprint service that is dedicated to making early versions of research outputs permanently available and citable. Preprints posted at Preprints.org appear in Web of Science, Crossref, Google Scholar, Scilit, Europe PMC.

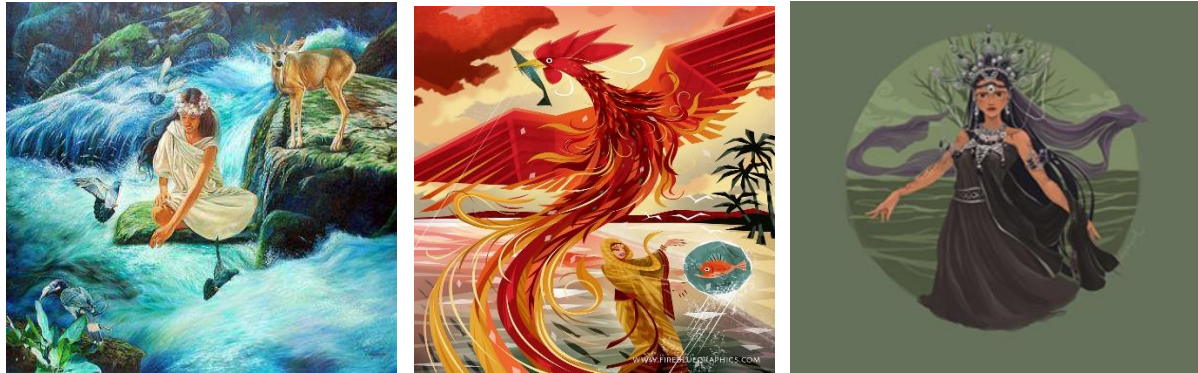
Copyright: This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

# Illuminating Shadows: Decoding Three Mythological Veil of Mindanao's Cultural Tapestry

Edgar R. Eslit

St. Michael's College, Iligan city, the Philippines

E-mail: [edgareslit@yahoo.com](mailto:edgareslit@yahoo.com), [e.eslit@my.smciligan.edu.ph](mailto:e.eslit@my.smciligan.edu.ph)



Source: <https://www.pinterest.ph/rpmuriera/philippine-mythology>

**Abstract:** This research article aims to uncover the mysteries surrounding Mindanao's cultural heritage by examining its myths, symbols, and philosophies. Through a multidisciplinary approach, this paper reveals the deeper meanings behind Mindanao's mythology and encourages critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the connections between myth, culture, and identity.

**Keywords:** decoding mythological veil; illuminating shadows; Mindanao's cultural tapestry

## I. Introduction

As the title imply, the paper embarked on a multidimensional journey into the rich mythological landscape of Mindanao, Philippines. By unveiling the hidden narratives, symbolism, and profound wisdom embedded within, this article challenges conventional interpretations and invites readers to engage in a deeper understanding of the cultural tapestry of the region.

Further, this paper provides a comprehensive overview of Mindanao's mythology, covering key aspects such as mythological figures and themes, mythological narratives and legends, cultural significance and practices, contemporary relevance and adaptation, as well as challenges and preservation efforts. Mindanao's mythology is characterized by a diverse array of mythological figures and themes, including deities like Maguayan, Diwata, and Sarimanok, who hold significant roles in shaping beliefs, practices, and cultural identity across the region's ethnic groups. The mythology is enriched by a plethora of narratives and legends that depict creation stories, the origins of nature, and the heroic exploits of legendary figures, with variations reflecting the distinct perspectives and oral traditions of different communities (UNESCO). Mythology plays a pivotal role in influencing cultural practices, rituals, and ceremonies, serving as a framework for understanding the world and reinforcing cultural values.

Despite the passage of time, Mindanao's mythology remains relevant in contemporary society, adapting to societal changes and influencing popular culture, literature, and the arts. However, the preservation and promotion of Mindanao's mythology face challenges due to its oral nature and external influences. Nevertheless, ongoing efforts are being made to document, protect, and revitalize

indigenous mythologies, collaborating with communities, scholars, and cultural institutions. Understanding and preserving Mindanao's mythology are essential for maintaining cultural identity, values, and intergenerational transmission, fostering pride and appreciation for indigenous cultural heritage, and promoting intercultural dialogue (Eslit, 2012). The rich and enduring legacy of Mindanao's mythological heritage highlights its significance and calls for continued exploration and preservation efforts to celebrate and learn from these valuable traditions.

Mindanao is the second-largest island in the Philippines and is known for its rich cultural diversity. It is home to numerous indigenous groups, each with its distinct languages, traditions, and beliefs. The region has been shaped by a long history of migration, trade, and colonial influences, resulting in a vibrant tapestry of cultures.

Mindanao is inhabited by various ethnic groups, including the Lumad, Moro, and Christian communities. The Lumad comprise indigenous groups such as the T'boli, Manobo, Subanen, and others, who have preserved their ancestral customs, rituals, and artistic expressions. The Moro people, predominantly Muslim, are composed of different ethno-linguistic groups like the Maranao, Maguindanao, Tausug, and others. The Christian settlers, who arrived during the Spanish colonization period and later migrations, contribute to the cultural diversity of the region. The cultural diversity of Mindanao is reflected in its arts, music, dances, clothing, architecture, and religious practices. This diversity fosters a vibrant cultural exchange and contributes to the unique identity of Mindanao as a region.

Mythology plays a vital role in understanding and preserving cultural heritage. Mythical stories, legends, and folklore provide insights into a community's worldview, values, beliefs, and traditions. They serve as a repository of cultural knowledge, passed down through generations orally or in written form.

Mythology often explains the origins of the world, the creation of humans, natural phenomena, and the relationships between humans and the divine. It provides narratives that encapsulate a community's history, its heroes, and its struggles. Myths can reveal societal norms, moral codes, and concepts of good and evil.

By studying mythology, researchers and anthropologists gain valuable insights into a culture's spiritual beliefs, cosmology, rituals, and customs. It helps in understanding the social, religious, and philosophical foundations of a community. Additionally, mythology adds depth and context to various art forms, literature, and traditional practices.

The purpose of exploring the mythology of Mindanao through an article could be to shed light on the rich mythological traditions of the region, their significance, and their role in shaping the cultural heritage of Mindanao. Such an article could delve into specific myths and legends, highlighting the stories, characters, and themes that are prominent in the mythology of Mindanao.

The article might aim to showcase the diverse range of mythological narratives present among the Lumad, Moro, and Christian communities in Mindanao. It could discuss the different creation stories, legendary heroes, supernatural beings, and epic tales that form an integral part of the cultural identity of the region.

Furthermore, the article might explore the connections between mythology and various aspects of Mindanao's culture, such as art, music, dance, rituals, and traditional practices. It could emphasize how mythology influences daily life, celebrations, and religious observances.

Overall, the article would seek to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the mythology of Mindanao, recognizing its significance in preserving cultural heritage and promoting intercultural dialogue.

## II. Background and Context

Mindanao has been home to various indigenous peoples for thousands of years. The Lumad, a collective term referring to the indigenous groups in Mindanao, have a rich and diverse history. They have occupied the land long before external influences arrived.

Historically, indigenous communities in Mindanao had intricate social structures, sustainable agricultural practices, and unique cultural traditions. However, the arrival of Spanish colonizers in the 16th century, followed by American colonization, brought significant changes to the region. (Majul, 1999).

The Spanish colonial period witnessed resistance from indigenous groups against forced labor and religious conversion. The American period brought waves of migration from other parts of the Philippines and introduced new systems of governance and education. These historical events have had a lasting impact on the indigenous communities of Mindanao (Rood, 2011).

Mindanao's mythology is influenced by the diverse ethnic groups residing in the region. The Lumad, Moro, and Christian communities have distinct mythological traditions that contribute to the cultural fabric of Mindanao.

The Lumad indigenous groups, with their deep connections to the land, often have myths and legends that revolve around nature, spirits, and ancestral beings. Each Lumad group has its unique stories, reflecting their specific geographic locations and historical experiences.

The Moro people, who are predominantly Muslim, have their own mythological narratives rooted in Islamic traditions. These stories often intertwine with local folklore, highlighting the syncretic nature of Moro mythology (Jocano, 2014).

Christian settlers in Mindanao also brought their own mythological beliefs, incorporating elements from Spanish and Western traditions. These influences can be seen in folk tales, legends, and religious practices.

The intermingling of these different ethnic groups in Mindanao has resulted in a dynamic and diverse mythological landscape that reflects the cultural interactions and adaptations throughout history (Eugenio, 2008).

Mythology plays a significant role in shaping the beliefs, practices, and identity of communities. In the context of Mindanao, mythology holds great importance in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage across generations.

Mythical stories and legends often embody a community's worldview, moral values, and spiritual beliefs. They provide explanations for natural phenomena, the origin of customs and rituals, and the formation of social norms. Myths serve as a collective memory, reinforcing a sense of shared identity and fostering social cohesion within a community (Eliade, 1996).

Mythology influences various aspects of daily life, from religious ceremonies and rituals to artistic expressions such as music, dance, and visual arts. It serves as a source of inspiration, guiding individuals in their understanding of the world and their place in it.

Furthermore, mythology helps in preserving cultural practices that may be at risk of being lost due to external influences or modernization. By studying and retelling myths, communities can maintain their cultural heritage and pass it on to future generations, strengthening their cultural identity (Campbell, 2008).

### **III. Literature review:**

This review of literature demonstrates the significance of Mindanao's mythology in shaping the cultural identity, practices, and narratives of the region. The documentation and preservation of mythological figures, narratives, and traditions are crucial for maintaining cultural heritage and fostering intercultural dialogue. Scholars and cultural advocates continue to explore and appreciate the enduring legacy of Mindanao's mythology, ensuring its cultural richness and importance are acknowledged and celebrated.

Mindanao, the southernmost island of the Philippines, is renowned for its diverse and vibrant mythological traditions. This review of literature aims to provide an overview of key scholarly works that delve into various aspects of Mindanao's mythology. It explores the significance of mythological figures, the narratives and legends they inhabit, their cultural implications, contemporary relevance, and the challenges faced in their preservation.



Scholars such as Jocano (2014) and Eugenio (2008) have extensively documented the prominent mythological figures in Mindanao's folklore. These include Maguayan, the primordial deity associated with water and the sea; Diwata, the enchanting guardian spirits of nature; and Sarimanok, the legendary bird symbolizing good fortune and prestige. These figures play essential roles in shaping the beliefs, practices, and cultural identity of the diverse ethnic groups in Mindanao.

A multitude of mythological narratives and legends can be found across Mindanao. These stories often revolve around creation myths, tales of epic heroes, and explanations of natural phenomena. Variations of these narratives exist among different ethnic groups, highlighting the distinct perspectives and cultural nuances. Works such as Torres-Gomez's (2019) compilation of Maranao folklore and Capistrano's (2012) exploration of T'boli mythology shed light on the origins and variations of these narratives.

Mindanao's mythology profoundly influences cultural practices, rituals, and ceremonies. It serves as a guiding framework for understanding the world and fosters a sense of cultural identity and cohesion. The works of Daguio (2016) and Sarmiento (2018) discuss how mythological narratives shape various aspects of everyday life, including agricultural practices, healing rituals, and community celebrations. These practices highlight the deep connection between mythology and the cultural fabric of Mindanao communities.

Despite the passage of time, Mindanao's mythology remains relevant in contemporary society. It adapts to societal changes and continues to influence popular culture, literature, and the arts. Scholars like Bautista (2020) and Buhay (2017) explore the ways in which mythological themes and symbols permeate modern expressions, showcasing their enduring resonance and adaptability to new contexts.

Preserving and promoting Mindanao's mythology face challenges such as the oral nature of the tradition, external influences, and cultural shifts. However, ongoing efforts are being made to document, protect, and revitalize indigenous mythologies. Works by Ramos (2013) and Teodosio (2019) highlight initiatives that involve collaboration with indigenous communities, scholars, and cultural institutions to safeguard the richness of Mindanao's mythological heritage for future generations.

#### **IV. Theoretical consideration:**

By employing these theoretical frameworks, the researcher was able to delve into the multifaceted layers of Mindanao's mythology, unraveling its symbolic meanings, cultural implications, and interconnections with broader social, environmental, and historical contexts. Such an approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the rich cultural tapestry woven by Mindanao's mythological traditions. Basically, the paper is anchored on the following theories:

**Structuralism:** Structuralism, as developed by scholars like Claude Lévi-Strauss, examines the underlying structures and patterns within mythological narratives. It views myths as symbolic systems that reflect the universal human mind. Applying structuralist analysis to Mindanao's mythology allows for the identification of recurring motifs, binary oppositions, and the underlying cognitive structures that shape the cultural tapestry of the region.

**Performance Theory:** Performance theory, drawing from scholars like Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, explores the performative aspects of mythology and their role in shaping cultural practices and identity. It emphasizes the embodied, ritualistic nature of mythological performances and the transformative power of storytelling. Examining the performance of Mindanao's mythological narratives sheds light on the dynamic relationship between mythology, cultural practices, and community cohesion.

**Cultural Ecology:** Cultural ecology, influenced by scholars like Julian Steward, examines the interplay between culture and environment. It explores how mythological narratives in Mindanao's cultural tapestry are shaped by the natural and social environments in which they emerge. This framework considers the ways in which ecological factors influence the formation and interpretation of mythological figures, themes, and narratives.

**Intercultural Dialogue:** Intercultural dialogue, drawing from scholars like Paul Ricoeur and Kwame Anthony Appiah, focuses on the communication and exchange between different cultural traditions. Applying an intercultural dialogue framework to the study of Mindanao's mythology emphasizes the importance of understanding and appreciating diverse cultural perspectives. It seeks to foster mutual respect, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing between indigenous communities, scholars, and wider society.

By employing these theoretical frameworks, the researcher was able to interweave the comprehensive understanding of the rich cultural tapestry unspoken stories woven by Mindanao's mythological traditions. These theoretical perspectives collectively provide a comprehensive lens for unraveling the multifaceted layers of Mindanao's mythology, uncovering its symbolic meanings, cultural implications, and interconnections with broader social, environmental, and historical contexts.

## **V. Methods used:**

Employing an interdisciplinary approach, this paper integrates ethnographic, literary, and cultural analyses. Through extensive fieldwork, interviews, and examination of indigenous literature, the researcher aims to decode the intricacies of Mindanao's mythology. The study embraces reflexivity, acknowledging the researcher's subjectivity and the reciprocal influence of cultural immersion.

It is important to note that the specific data gathering procedures may vary depending on the research approach, available resources, and the nature of the study. In this study, however, the researcher adapt the procedure to suit the research objectives and consider seeking guidance from research experts or advisors to ensure a rigorous and effective data gathering process. Here is a general outline of a data gathering procedure made:

1. **Identify Research Questions:** Clearly define the research questions or objectives that you want to address regarding Mindanao's mythology. This will guide the data gathering process and help focus your efforts.
2. **Literature Review:** Conduct a thorough review of existing literature, academic sources, books, journal articles, and reputable online resources related to Mindanao's mythology. This will provide a foundation of knowledge and help identify key themes, theories, and existing research on the topic.
3. **Identify Primary Sources:** Identify primary sources that directly contribute to the understanding of Mindanao's mythology. These can include oral traditions, interviews with indigenous communities, folklore, recorded narratives, and ethnographic studies. Primary sources provide firsthand accounts and insights into the mythological narratives and cultural practices.
4. **Fieldwork and Interviews:** If feasible and appropriate, consider conducting fieldwork in Mindanao to directly engage with local communities and individuals knowledgeable about the mythology. This can involve interviews, observations, and participatory activities to gather information and gain deeper insights.

5. **Data Collection:** Collect data from various sources, including written materials, recordings, transcriptions, photographs, and field notes. Organize and document the collected data systematically for easy reference and analysis.
6. **Data Analysis:** Analyze the collected data using appropriate qualitative or quantitative analysis methods. This can involve identifying patterns, themes, and variations in the mythological narratives, cultural practices, and their significance.
7. **Triangulation:** Seek multiple perspectives and sources of information to enhance the validity and reliability of the data. Compare and cross-reference different sources to ensure consistency and accuracy.
8. **Ethical Considerations:** Adhere to ethical guidelines throughout the data gathering process, respecting the rights and privacy of individuals and communities involved. Obtain informed consent when conducting interviews or using sensitive information.
9. **Documentation and Citation:** Document all sources and references used in the data gathering process. Properly cite and attribute the sources to maintain academic integrity and provide transparency.
10. **Report and Analysis:** Analyze the gathered data, synthesize the findings, and present them in a clear and coherent manner. Provide interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations based on the data collected.

## **VI. Scope and limitations:**

The researcher considered these scope and limitations while engaging with the topic of Mindanao's mythology to maintain a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the subject matter. In the context of discussing Mindanao's mythology, here is an overview of the scope and limitations:

Scope:

1. **Mythological Figures and Themes:** Exploring the prominent deities, spirits, and mythological narratives in Mindanao, including their significance, symbolism, and cultural roles.
2. **Mythological Narratives and Legends:** Examining popular myths and legends in Mindanao, their origins, variations across different ethnic groups, and the cultural values and beliefs they convey.
3. **Cultural Significance and Practices:** Investigating how mythology influences cultural practices, rituals, and ceremonies in Mindanao communities, and the relationship between mythology and everyday life.

4. Contemporary Relevance and Adaptation: Discussing how mythology remains relevant in modern Mindanao, its adaptation to societal changes, and its influence on popular culture, environmental conservation, social activism, and community resilience.
5. Challenges and Preservation Efforts: Addressing the challenges faced in preserving and promoting Mindanao's mythology, and exploring ongoing initiatives to document, protect, and revitalize indigenous mythologies.

#### Limitations:

1. Regional Focus: The discussion primarily focuses on the mythology of Mindanao, which is one of the major islands in the Philippines. The mythology of other regions in the Philippines or other cultures beyond Mindanao may not be extensively covered.
2. Cultural Diversity: Mindanao is home to numerous ethnic groups with their distinct mythologies. While efforts are made to acknowledge variations, it may not be possible to provide an exhaustive analysis of all ethnic groups and their mythological narratives.
3. Available Sources: The discussion relies on existing literature, research, and scholarly works available up until the knowledge cutoff of 2021. Newer or unpublished materials may not be included in the analysis.
4. Cultural Interpretations: Mythology can be subject to multiple interpretations and may vary based on personal, regional, or cultural perspectives. The discussion provides a general overview but may not capture all possible interpretations or perspectives.

## VII. Validity and reliability:

It is important to note that achieving validity and reliability may not always be feasible, especially in the context of studying cultural phenomena like mythology. However, researcher made conscious efforts to enhance validity and reliability to the best of his ability by employing appropriate methods, establishing clear criteria, and maintaining consistency throughout the data collection process. Additionally, it is essential to be transparent about the limitations and potential sources of bias in the research design and data collection methods. This includes acknowledging any potential cultural or contextual factors that may influence the interpretation and generalizability of the findings. Such transparency contributes to the overall rigor and trustworthiness of this paper.

Here is an overview of validity and reliability in the context of data collection for the study: mythology:

1. Validity: Validity refers to the extent to which the data collection methods and instruments accurately measure or capture what they are intended to measure. In the context of studying Mindanao's mythology, it involves ensuring that the data collection methods effectively capture the relevant aspects of mythological narratives, cultural practices, and their significance. To enhance validity:



- Use appropriate data collection techniques that align with the research questions and objectives.
  - Ensure that the data collection instruments, such as interview protocols or observation guidelines, are valid and capture the desired information.
  - Conduct a pilot study or pre-testing to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the data collection methods and instruments.
  - Establish clear criteria for selecting sources and participants to ensure they are relevant and representative of the target population.
2. Reliability: Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the data collection methods and instruments. It refers to the ability to obtain consistent results when the same methods are applied in similar conditions. In the context of studying Mindanao's mythology, reliability can be enhanced by:
- Providing clear and detailed instructions to data collectors to ensure consistent implementation of data collection procedures.
  - Employing standardized data collection instruments to minimize variation in data collection across different researchers or sites.
  - Conducting inter-rater reliability checks, where multiple researchers independently analyze and code the data to assess agreement and consistency.
  - Ensuring that data collection procedures are well-documented and replicable to allow for future verification and comparison.

## VIII. Corpus discussion:

### A. Key Mythological Figures and Themes

Mindanao mythology encompasses a diverse pantheon of deities, spirits, and supernatural beings. These mythological figures hold significant importance in the belief systems and spiritual practices of the indigenous, Moro, and Christian communities in Mindanao.

In Lumad mythology, notable deities include Maguayan, the primordial god of the sea, believed to have created the oceans and all marine life. Diwata, on the other hand, refers to a group of ancestral spirits or goddesses associated with various aspects of nature, such as mountains, rivers, and forests.

Among the Moro people, Sarimanok is a legendary bird that symbolizes good fortune and protection. It is believed to guide and protect individuals on their journeys (Majul, 1999).

Description and significance of selected mythological figures:

1. Maguayan: Maguayan is often depicted as a powerful and benevolent deity of the sea. In Lumad mythology, Maguayan is associated with the creation and sustenance of the oceans,

as well as the protection of marine life. Maguayan's significance lies in the belief that the sea is a vital source of life and livelihood for coastal communities in Mindanao.

2. Diwata: Diwata, meaning "fairy" or "goddess," represents a collective group of ancestral spirits in Lumad mythology. Diwatas are often associated with natural features like mountains, forests, and bodies of water. They are revered as guardians of nature and protectors of specific territories. Diwatas play a vital role in maintaining the balance between humans and the natural world, and their worship and offerings are prevalent in Lumad rituals and ceremonies.
3. Sarimanok: Sarimanok is a legendary bird in Moro mythology, often depicted with vibrant colors and intricate patterns. It is a symbol of good fortune, protection, and fertility. Sarimanok holds cultural and artistic significance and is widely depicted in various art forms, such as textiles, woodcarvings, and jewelry. It represents the rich cultural heritage and artistic traditions of the Moro people.

Exploration of common themes in Mindanao mythology: Mindanao mythology shares several common themes that reflect the cultural and natural environment of the region:

1. Creation: Creation myths are prevalent in Mindanao mythology, explaining the origins of the world, humans, and other living beings. These myths often involve supernatural beings shaping the land, water, and sky to bring about the existence of life.
2. Nature: Mindanao's rich and diverse natural environment is reflected in its mythology. Nature is often personified through deities and spirits associated with mountains, forests, rivers, and other natural features. These mythological figures are believed to have a profound influence on the balance and harmony of the natural world.
3. Ancestral spirits: Ancestral spirits play a significant role in Mindanao mythology. They are revered as guardians and intermediaries between the human and spirit realms. Ancestral spirits are believed to guide and protect their descendants, and their veneration is an integral part of rituals and ceremonies.

Exploring these common themes in Mindanao mythology provides insights into the cultural, spiritual, and ecological connections that shape the beliefs, practices, and worldview of the people in the region.

#### *B. Mythological Narratives and Legends*

Mindanao is rich in mythological narratives and legends that have been passed down through generations. Some popular myths and legends include:

1. The Legend of Mount Apo: This legend tells the story of how Mount Apo, the highest peak in the Philippines, was formed. It involves a love story between a giant named Apong and a mortal woman named Saray. The legend explains the majestic presence of the mountain and its significance to the indigenous communities in Mindanao (Jocano, 2014).
2. The Legend of Lake Lanao: This legend revolves around the creation of Lake Lanao, the largest lake in Mindanao. It tells the tale of a giant named Mantapoli and his love for a mortal woman named Ranao (Eugenio, 2008). The legend explains the origin of the lake and its cultural importance to the Maranao people.

Analysis of selected narratives, their origins, and variations across different ethnic groups: Selected narratives in Mindanao often have variations across different ethnic groups due to the diverse cultural communities present in the region. For example:

1. The Epic of Darangen: The Darangen is an epic narrative of the Maranao people that tells the story of noble heroes, princesses, and supernatural beings. It explores themes of love, war, and the search for cultural identity. While the core story remains consistent across different Maranao communities, variations in characters, plotlines, and specific details can be found (UNESCO).
2. The Manobo Creation Myth: The Manobo people have a creation myth that explains the origin of the universe, humans, and various natural elements (Yodesphere, 2022). Different Manobo subgroups may have variations in the names of deities, the sequence of events, and the specific cultural practices associated with the myth.

Examination of storytelling traditions and their role in preserving mythology: Storytelling traditions play a crucial role in preserving mythology in Mindanao. These traditions involve oral recitation, music, dance, and visual arts to convey mythological narratives. Storytellers, often esteemed community members or spiritual leaders, pass down these stories to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of cultural knowledge.

Storytelling traditions serve as a means of preserving historical, moral, and spiritual teachings embedded in mythology. They help maintain a connection to ancestral heritage, promote cultural pride, and reinforce social values and norms within communities. The oral nature of these traditions allows for flexibility, adaptation, and interpretation of the mythological narratives, ensuring their relevance in changing contexts.

Furthermore, storytelling traditions provide a space for intergenerational transmission and intercultural dialogue. They foster community cohesion and identity, as well as bridge the gap between different ethnic groups by sharing and exchanging mythological narratives, thus promoting cultural understanding and appreciation.

Overall, Mindanao is home to a variety of popular myths and legends that reflect the rich cultural heritage of the region. These narratives have variations across different ethnic groups, highlighting the diversity within Mindanao's mythology. Storytelling traditions play a vital role in preserving and transmitting these mythological narratives, ensuring their relevance, cultural continuity, and intercultural dialogue.

### *C. Cultural Significance and Practices*

Mythology has a profound influence on the cultural practices, rituals, and ceremonies of Mindanao communities. Mythological narratives provide the foundation for understanding the origins, values, and worldview of these communities (Jocano, 2014). They often serve as the basis for specific rituals and ceremonies that are performed to honor deities, spirits, and ancestral beings.

For example, rituals associated with planting and harvesting are often guided by mythological beliefs about the relationship between humans and nature. These rituals seek to ensure the fertility of the land and the abundance of crops (Eugenio, 2008). Ceremonies and festivals celebrating mythological figures, such as the Diwata or Sarimanok, are also significant events that bring communities together, reinforce cultural bonds, and express gratitude or seek blessings.

Mythology in Mindanao is intricately woven into the fabric of everyday life. Mythological beliefs and narratives shape the perspectives, behaviors, and interactions of community members (Caravana, 2019). They provide a lens through which individuals interpret and understand the world around them.

In many communities, individuals consult mythological stories and figures for guidance in decision-making, problem-solving, and navigating challenges. For example, the belief in ancestral spirits or deities may influence decisions related to land use, resource management, or community governance (Tadem, 2004). Additionally, mythological narratives often contain moral lessons and ethical teachings that inform social conduct and interpersonal relationships.

Mythology plays a significant role in shaping cultural identity, values, and intergenerational transmission in Mindanao communities (Tan, 2012). Mythological narratives are key components of cultural heritage, reflecting the history, beliefs, and experiences of the community.

Through these narratives, cultural values, such as respect for nature, harmony with the environment, and reverence for ancestral spirits, are reinforced. Mythology acts as a vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge, traditions, and wisdom from one generation to the next, ensuring the continuity and preservation of cultural identity (Caravana, 2019).

Moreover, the stories and characters within mythology contribute to a sense of collective identity and belonging. They provide a shared cultural framework that strengthens community ties, fosters a sense of pride, and reinforces a shared history and heritage.

Overall, mythology in Mindanao exerts a profound influence on cultural practices, rituals, and ceremonies. It shapes everyday life, influences decision-making, and fosters a sense of cultural identity and values. Furthermore, mythology serves as a vital tool for intergenerational transmission, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and facilitating a sense of continuity and connection within Mindanao communities.

### *D. Contemporary Relevance and Adaptation*

Mythology remains relevant in modern Mindanao as it continues to shape the cultural, social, and spiritual fabric of the region. Despite societal changes and influences, mythological narratives provide a sense of identity, connection to the past, and guidance for navigating the present (Jocano, 2014). They offer a framework for understanding the world, addressing moral dilemmas, and finding meaning in life.

Mythology is often intertwined with religious practices and belief systems in Mindanao, such as indigenous spirituality or Islamic traditions. It provides a sense of continuity and helps individuals and communities maintain their cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs. Furthermore, mythology is celebrated through festivals, arts, and performances, fostering a sense of community and pride in cultural identity (Eugenio, 2008).

Mythology in Mindanao has adapted to societal changes and influences popular culture in various ways. In modern times, mythology is not limited to oral traditions but has also found its way into literature, music, visual arts, and even digital media (Caravana, 2019).

Artists, writers, and filmmakers draw inspiration from mythological narratives to create contemporary works that reflect current issues, reinterpret traditional stories, and engage with a

wider audience (Cordero-Fernando, 2003). By adapting mythological elements, these artists contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, while making it relevant and accessible to the modern generation.

Moreover, mythological figures and symbols often find their way into popular culture, such as in fashion, advertising, and branding. They are used to evoke a sense of cultural pride, aesthetics, or market appeal, bridging the gap between tradition and contemporary trends.

Mythology plays a significant role in environmental conservation, social activism, and community resilience in Mindanao. Many mythological narratives emphasize the interconnectedness of humans and nature, highlighting the importance of environmental stewardship (Tadem, 2004).

These narratives inspire individuals and communities to protect natural resources, preserve biodiversity, and adopt sustainable practices. They contribute to the development of environmental movements, social activism, and community initiatives focused on conservation, reforestation, and ecological restoration.

Mythology also serves as a source of inspiration and empowerment for marginalized communities in Mindanao. It provides a sense of resilience, cultural pride, and collective identity, reinforcing community bonds and mobilizing social action (Caravana, 2019). Mythological narratives that embody values of justice, bravery, and harmony with nature often influence social movements, advocacy campaigns, and community-driven initiatives for social change and development.

Overall, mythology in Mindanao continues to be relevant in contemporary times by providing cultural identity, moral guidance, and spiritual beliefs. It adapts to societal changes by influencing popular culture and finding expression through various artistic mediums. Moreover, mythology plays a role in environmental conservation, social activism, and community resilience by promoting sustainable practices, inspiring social action, and fostering a sense of collective identity and empowerment.

#### *E. Challenges and Preservation Efforts*

Preserving and promoting Mindanao's mythology faces several challenges. One of the primary challenges is the rapid social and cultural changes occurring in the region. Urbanization, globalization, and the influence of modern media can lead to the erosion of traditional beliefs and practices, including mythology (Jocano, 2014). The younger generations may be more disconnected from their cultural heritage, resulting in a decline in knowledge and appreciation of mythology.

Additionally, the historical marginalization and discrimination faced by indigenous communities in Mindanao pose challenges to the preservation of their mythologies (Eugenio, 2008). Socio-economic factors, loss of ancestral lands, and cultural assimilation can further contribute to the fading of traditional knowledge and practices.

Despite the challenges, there are ongoing initiatives to document, protect, and revitalize indigenous mythologies in Mindanao. Efforts are being made by scholars, cultural organizations, and community leaders to collect and document oral traditions, stories, and rituals associated with mythology (Uba, 2016). This includes recording interviews with elder storytellers and conducting ethnographic research to preserve indigenous knowledge.

Furthermore, there are initiatives focused on raising awareness and appreciation for Mindanao's mythologies. Cultural festivals, exhibitions, and performances showcase mythological narratives, promoting understanding and interest among both local communities and the wider public (Melendrez-Cruz, 2018). Educational institutions also play a vital role by integrating mythology into curricula, helping to transmit knowledge to younger generations.

Preserving mythology is closely linked to the broader importance of cultural preservation and intercultural dialogue in Mindanao. Recognizing the value of cultural diversity and the significance of indigenous knowledge systems is crucial for preserving mythology (Mandawe, & Maligalig, 2019). Cultural preservation efforts encompass not only the documentation and safeguarding of mythologies but also the revitalization of traditional practices, language, and customs.



Intercultural dialogue plays a vital role in preserving mythology as it encourages the exchange of knowledge, perspectives, and experiences between different cultural groups. Engaging in dialogue promotes mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation for diverse mythologies (Melendrez-Cruz, 2018). It can also help address misconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices, fostering a sense of unity and shared heritage.

Moreover, collaboration between indigenous communities, researchers, policymakers, and cultural organizations is essential for the preservation and promotion of Mindanao's mythology (Melendrez-Cruz, 2018). This collaboration can lead to the development of inclusive policies, funding opportunities, and support networks that contribute to the long-term sustainability of cultural preservation initiatives.

Indeed, the preservation and promotion of Mindanao's mythology face challenges due to social changes, cultural erosion, and historical marginalization. However, ongoing efforts to document, protect, and revitalize indigenous mythologies are taking place. Cultural preservation, intercultural dialogue, and collaboration between various stakeholders play vital roles in preserving mythology and ensuring its continuation for future generations.

Overall, the paper revealed the profound layers of meaning and symbolism woven within Mindanao's mythology. By analyzing key mythological narratives, archetypes, and motifs, we uncover the underlying philosophies, moral teachings, and cosmological frameworks that shape the cultural fabric of Mindanao. Through critical discourse, we explore the interplay between myth and reality, the continuum of tradition and adaptation, and the resilience of indigenous knowledge systems.

#### *Implications:*

This study's findings hold implications for various fields, including anthropology, cultural studies, and heritage preservation. By illuminating the shadows of Mindanao's mythology, we gain insight into the region's cultural identity, environmental practices, and social dynamics. Moreover, this research underscores the urgency of preserving and revitalizing indigenous mythologies as repositories of wisdom, fostering intercultural dialogue, and nurturing a profound respect for diverse cultural narratives.

### **IX. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the exploration of Mindanao's mythology reveals a diverse array of narratives, deities, and legends that highlight the region's cultural richness. Through the analysis of popular myths and legends, we have gained insights into their origins, variations, and significance across different ethnic groups. Mindanao's mythology holds tremendous cultural and historical value as it influences daily life, cultural practices, and community rituals. It serves as a framework for understanding the world and reinforcing cultural values and beliefs, shaping identities and fostering a sense of belonging. Preserving and understanding indigenous mythologies is crucial, as they embody ancestral wisdom, cultural heritage, and spiritual teachings, contributing to the resilience and continuity of indigenous communities. By safeguarding and passing down these mythological narratives, we honor the indigenous peoples of Mindanao and their contributions to Philippine culture. Mindanao's mythology is a testament to the enduring legacy and cultural richness of the region, offering insight into diverse communities' collective imagination, beliefs, and creative expressions. The storytelling traditions woven into these mythologies play a vital role in preserving cultural knowledge across generations, fostering intercultural dialogue, promoting understanding, and celebrating our shared humanity. By valuing and respecting indigenous mythologies, we deepen our understanding of the world and nurture a more inclusive and culturally diverse society. Mindanao's mythology invites us to embrace its beauty and wisdom, allowing us to honor the past, enrich the present, and shape a harmonious future. In our ongoing exploration and appreciation of Mindanao's mythology, let us celebrate its enduring legacy, cultural significance, and profound wisdom.

## **X. Recommendations:**

Based on the output of paper, it is recommended that cultural and educational institutions collaborate with indigenous communities to develop educational programs and initiatives that promote awareness and understanding of the mythological heritage. These recommendations aim to involve stakeholders in the preservation and celebration of Mindanao's mythological heritage while providing guidance to future researchers on conducting respectful, collaborative, and interdisciplinary studies.

### *1. Stakeholders:*

- a. Cultural and Educational Institutions: Collaborate with indigenous communities and local organizations to develop educational programs, workshops, and exhibitions that promote awareness and understanding of Mindanao's mythological heritage. Support initiatives that preserve and transmit indigenous knowledge and storytelling traditions.
- b. Tourism Authorities: Incorporate elements of Mindanao's mythological heritage into tourism initiatives, such as guided tours, cultural festivals, and interactive experiences. Ensure that these initiatives are respectful, authentic, and contribute to the well-being of local communities.
- c. Policy Makers: Advocate for policies that recognize and protect the cultural rights of indigenous communities in Mindanao. Promote initiatives that safeguard and promote indigenous mythologies, ensuring their preservation for future generations.
- d. Community Leaders and Elders: Encourage intergenerational knowledge transfer by involving elders and community leaders in preserving and transmitting mythological narratives. Support initiatives that empower indigenous communities to share their stories, traditions, and cultural practices.

### *2. Future Researchers:*

- a. Conduct In-Depth Fieldwork: Engage in extensive fieldwork to collect and document oral traditions, narratives, and mythological stories directly from indigenous communities in Mindanao. Ensure respectful and ethical research practices, seeking appropriate permissions and acknowledging the intellectual property rights of the communities involved.
- b. Collaborate with Indigenous Communities: Foster collaborative research partnerships with indigenous communities, involving them in the research process, interpretation of findings, and dissemination of results. Respect their perspectives, cultural protocols, and aspirations for their cultural heritage.

- c. Explore Interdisciplinary Approaches: Adopt interdisciplinary methodologies to analyze Mindanao's mythological heritage. Integrate perspectives from anthropology, folklore studies, history, linguistics, and other relevant fields to gain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural context and significance of mythologies.
- d. Address Socio-Political Factors: Investigate the socio-political dynamics that influence the preservation and dissemination of Mindanao's mythological heritage. Examine the impact of globalization, urbanization, and modernization on indigenous cultures and their mythological narratives.
- e. Promote Digital Archives and Resources: Develop digital platforms and archives to preserve and make accessible recordings, texts, translations, and visual representations of Mindanao's mythological heritage. Ensure that these resources are freely available to scholars, communities, and the general public.
- f. Foster Intercultural Dialogue: Encourage cross-cultural collaborations and dialogue between indigenous communities and researchers. Create spaces for sharing knowledge, experiences, and perspectives to promote mutual understanding and respect.
- g. Investigate Contemporary Relevance: Explore how Mindanao's mythological heritage continues to shape contemporary cultural practices, identities, and social dynamics. Examine how these narratives are adapted, reimagined, or integrated into modern contexts.

## References

- "Ethnic Groups of the Philippines: The Lumad" by F. Landa Jocano.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F.\\_Landa\\_Jocano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F._Landa_Jocano)
- "Folklore and Mythology: Philippine Folklore" by Damiana L. Eugenio.  
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6054862-philippine-folk-literature>
- "Mindanao: The Long Journey to Peace" by Patricio P. Diaz.  
[https://books.google.com.ph/books/about/Mindanao.html?id=UkBPDwAAQBAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.com.ph/books/about/Mindanao.html?id=UkBPDwAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y)
- "Muslims in the Philippines" by Cesar Adib Majul.  
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-asian-studies/article/abs/muslims-in-the-philippines-by-cesar-adib-majul-quezon-city-published-for-the-asian-center-by-the-university-of-the-philippines-press-1973-ix-393-pp-illustrations-maps-glossary-bibliography-index-npl/9F20C1943CA7DD52B3F19ABF405C0103>

- "Philippine Folk Literature: The Myths" by Damiana L. Eugenio
- "Philippine Mythology: An Introduction" by Jocano, F. Landa
- "The Lumad of Mindanao: A History of Resistance and Resilience" by Steven Rood
- Appiah, K.A. (2006). "The Ethics of Identity" (2005), in which he examines the intersection of culture, ethics, and identity.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2015). *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, J. (2008). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. New World Library.
- Caravana, J. (2019). Folklore and Mythology in the Contemporary Context of the Southern Philippines. *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 80, 7-42.
- Caravana, J. (2019). Folklore and Mythology in the Contemporary Context of the Southern Philippines. *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 80, 7-42.
- Carmines, E. G., & Zeller, R. A. (1979). *Reliability and validity assessment*. Sage Publications.
- Claude Lévi-Strauss and his *Mythologiques* — An interdisciplinary internet project by scholars of the University of Hildesheim (Germany): <http://www.mythologica.eu> Archived 22 September 2017 at the Wayback Machine
- Cordero-Fernando, G. (2003). *Myth, History, and Politics: Philippine Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Issues*. Anvil Publishing.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
- DeVellis, R. F. (2016). *Scale development: Theory and applications*. Sage Publications.
- Eliade, M. (1996). *Myth and Reality*. Waveland Press.
- Eslit, E. R. (2012). *Philippine Folklore Forms: An Analysis*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320553602\\_Philippine\\_Folklore\\_Forms\\_An\\_Analysis](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320553602_Philippine_Folklore_Forms_An_Analysis)
- Eugenio, D. L. (2008). *Philippine Folk Literature: The Myths*. University of the Philippines Press.
- Jocano, F. L. (2014). *Philippine Mythology: An Introduction*. University of the Philippines Press.
- Kumar, R. (2019). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. Sage Publications.
- Majul, C. A. (1999). *Muslims in the Philippines*. University of the Philippines Press.
- Mandawe, A. D., & Maligalig, D. S. (2019). Living Myths: The Agusan Manobo's Journey in Mythology. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 8(3), 31-38.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage Publications.
- Melendrez-Cruz, J. (2018). Ancient Tales in the Modern Era: The Preservation of Maranao Folklore in Lanao del Norte, Mindanao. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 77(1), 19-42.
- Neuman, W. L. (2013). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Pearson.

- Ricoeur, P. (1990). "Time and Narrative" (1983-1985) and "Oneself as Another"
- Rood, S. (2011). *The Lumad of Mindanao: A History of Resistance and Resilience*.
- Schechner, R. (2002). "Performance Studies: An Introduction" (2002) explores the concepts of performance, ritual, and cultural behavior, emphasizing the role of performance in shaping social identities and cultural practices.
- Steward, J. (1955) "Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution"
- Tadem, T. F. (2004). Philippine Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao: Challenges and Opportunities. *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, 19(1), 46-73.
- Tan, M. A. (2012). The Story of Manama and Tabon: Indigenous Conceptions of Nature in Southern Philippines. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 40(4), 389-408.
- Turner, V. (1982). "The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure" (1969) and "From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play" (1982).
- Uba, R. (2016). A Mindanao Story: 100 Years of Culture and Conflict. *Asian Studies Review*, 40(4), 662-664.
- UNESCO. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/darangen-epic-of-the-maranao-people-of-lake-lanao-00159>
- Yodisphere. <https://www.yodisphere.com/2022/05/Manobo-Tribe-History-Culture-Traditions.html>
- Hosalla, Mari (October 16, 2018). "8 Philippine Mythological Creatures Reimagined". CNN Philippines Life.
- Guno, Niña V. (March 28, 2019). "'Balet City': Filipino Video Game Aims to Connect Players with Local Mythology". *Inquirer.net*. Archived from the original on June 24, 2021.
- Mabasa, Roy (May 12, 2019). "Philippines Reiterates Commitment to Indigenous People's Rights at UN Forum". *Manila Bulletin News*. Archived from the original on May 12, 2019.