

**Peer-reviewed article**

**Animals as representations of female domestic roles in selected fables from the Philippines and South Africa**

**Genevieve Jorolan-Quintero** University of the Philippines  
Humanities Department  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
gjquintero@up.edu.ph

**Connie Makgabo** University of Pretoria  
Department of Humanities Education  
Faculty of Education  
connie.makgabo@up.ac.za

**Abstract**

South Africa and the Philippines are home to a number of indigenous groups whose cultures and traditions have not been tainted by centuries of colonization. This paper compares the pre-colonial literature of cultural communities in two countries, where one is part of a continent (South Africa) while the other is an archipelago (the Philippines). Despite the differences in their geographical features, the two countries share common experiences: 1) colonized by European powers; 2) have a significant number of indigenous communities; 3) a treasury of surviving folk literature. Published African and Philippine folktales reveal recurring images and elements. One of these is the use of animals as characters, performing domestic tasks in households, and representing gender roles. This paper compares how animal characters portray feminine characteristics and domestic roles in selected fables from South Africa and the Philippines, specifically on the commonalities in the roles of the female characters. The research highlights the relevance of recording and publishing of folk literature, and the subsequent integration and teaching thereof within basic and higher education curricula.

## Introduction

The Philippines and South Africa share similarities in terms of their historical and cultural experiences. Like South Africa, the Philippines was colonised by western countries; specifically, Spain for over four hundred years, and the United States in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. South Africa, like the Philippines, is home to a number of indigenous socio-linguistics groups, those whose cultures and traditions have survived centuries of colonisation. Among the significant cultural legacies that the indigenous communities have preserved are their oral traditions, myths, legends, folktales, fables, folk epics, and others. Fables, in particular, are popular in both cultures, and are used as reading materials in primary schools. This paper examines similarities in the portrayal of animal characters as women among selected folktales from Philippine indigenous groups and from the Northern Sotho language in South Africa. These similarities and differences include content, themes, subject matter, cultural significance, values, beliefs, and ideals embodied in each text. The paper also highlights the importance of the recording and preservation of folk literature as a significant heritage of pre-colonial culture. More than their value as cultural legacies, folk literature needs to be preserved for posterity; oral traditions, and folktales in particular, contribute to the cultural literacy and cultural engagement of learners. Specific courses that promote appreciation for tradition and cultural values have been integrated into the basic and higher education curricula both in the Philippines and South Africa. Topics such as these will encourage in-depth analysis and appreciation of folk literature content at all levels of education. Both teachers and learners alike can derive inspiration from critical discussion of folktales and their relevance to culture and society.

It is imperative that the oral traditions from cultural communities be recorded, put down into writing, and published. They reflect the culture and traditions of pre-colonial societies. They tell their stories and their worldviews. They reflect the cultural identities and experiences of the people. As such, their stories should be told through their own viewpoints. As the Ethiopian proverb goes, "Until the lions find their own historian, tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."

This paper is a first in the area of comparing the pre-colonial literature of indigenous communities in two countries, where one is part of a continent (South Africa) while the other is an archipelago (the Philippines). In view of the absence of evidence of a similar study having been carried out before, this project is rendered both significant and urgent. Despite the geographical differences, the two countries share common experiences: (1) both have been colonized by western powers; (2) both have a significant number of indigenous groups who co-exist with mainstream society; (3) in both countries, indigenous literature is an essential part of the survival of tribal cultures and traditions, as propagated by their inclusion in curricula; (4) although many of these oral traditions, especially folk literature, have found their way into print, there is still much unrecorded literature in the field that needs to be collected, recorded, preserved, and published for the benefit of mainstream society and for future researches.

## Problem statement

History attempts to explain and define the meaning of our experiences as colonised people, but what is put down on record typically does not embody how the previously colonised people perceive themselves. The study of folklore is another way of enabling one to know and understand people's culture, their customs, their values and rituals.

In the Philippines, interest in pre-colonial history and culture increased in the early 1970s when Philippine folklore scholars discovered a treasury of oral literature from indigenous socio-linguistic groups. The stories, myths, legends, folktales, and epics reveal the groups' significant cultural customs and traditions, values and beliefs, ideals, and worldviews, which they have preserved and passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth. Since then, there has been a conscious effort to collect, record, preserve, and publish this significant cultural legacy.

Stories, like those embodied in folklore, transmit knowledge. Even modern societies depend on stories for information, for entertainment and, for the need to reflect on life events. The use of stories has characterised many indigenous socio-linguistic groups from all over the world since time immemorial. Myths, legends, folktales and folk epics embody valuable indigenous knowledge systems. There is urgency in writing them down and publishing them for the appreciation of the present generation and the generations ahead before this legacy is lost altogether. Such an eventuality would deprive peoples of various nations their right to learn, understand, and embrace their identity, culture, and being - what they once were before the waves of colonization and what they can still be in future.

There is a vacuum that needs to be filled by the publication of folk literature insofar as oral traditions will fade from memory. These publications, when used as pedagogic materials, are aids to the teaching and learning of indigenous knowledge at all levels of education. The teaching of folk literature provides an authentic platform for cultural literacy and cultural engagement, rendering learners more articulate and knowledgeable about their own ethnic identities. Unlike foreign literary texts, the subject matter and scope of folk literature are relatable for learners. Character behaviour and locale or settings, for instance, are literary elements that learners can identify with. Reading the texts in one's own language further enhances literary and literacy skills.

## Literature review

Folk literature has been defined in various ways; these definitions share a similar concept pointing to it as an essential aspect of culture and traditions. Folk literature is significant because it embodies the life experiences of the folk, the indigenous communities, and a nation's pre-colonial history. Brunvand (1968:20) postulates that "folklore is the traditional, 'unofficial', 'non-institutional' part of culture which encompasses all knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings, and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms of word of mouth." Makgamatha (1993:28) refers to folklore as "people's customs – any of those beliefs, customs and Oral literary forms 'common to man' passed from one generation to the other by word of mouth". The significance of folk literature goes beyond its entertainment value. It encompasses cultural identity and heritage and is thus an important inclusion in the curriculum.

Oral literature includes, among others, oral narratives (myths, legends, folktales), historical narratives, epic poems, griots, epigrams, occupational verse, ritual verse, praise poems and musical genres. These are the means used by indigenous communities to pass down to subsequent generations knowledge about their culture, traditions, and belief systems. Because of the oral nature of this literature (that is, being transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to the next) the narratives vary in terms of character portrayals and plot twists.

Several significant studies on oral literature have been conducted in Africa. There is a substantial collection of African “myths, epics, funeral dirges, proverbs, praise poems...” (Owomoyela 1979). Despite this, Finnegan (1970:29) expressed concern over the status of African oral literature, pointing out that the available published research about it has not been “widely appreciated...” and most of it is “buried in inaccessible journals”.

A description of folk literature in the article *The Literary Forms in Philippine Literature* (Godinez-Ortega n.d.) pointed out that:

[it] can best be appreciated in the context of the country's pre-colonial cultural traditions and the socio-political histories of its colonial and contemporary traditions. The average Filipino's unfamiliarity with his indigenous literature was largely due to what has been impressed upon him: that his country was 'discovered' and, hence, Philippine 'history' started only in 1521...The rousing's of nationalistic pride in the 1960s and 1970s also helped bring about this change of attitude among a new breed of Filipinos concerned about the 'Filipino identity'.

South African and Philippine folk literature share three common features. First, oral traditions embody significant knowledge and values that reflect cultural identity; second, despite the already recorded and published texts, a number of these oral traditions are yet to be recorded before they are completely lost; and third, despite the published texts, many Filipinos and South Africans are unfamiliar with, and lack knowledge about, their country's indigenous literature.

A review of published African and Philippine folk literature reveals recurring images and elements. One of these is the natural world. In the African folk tales, the stories reflect a culture where animals abound; consequently, the monkey, elephant, giraffe, lion, zebra, crocodile, and rhinoceros appear frequently along with a wide variety of birds such as the ostrich, secretary bird, and eagle. These animals and birds take on human characteristics of greed, jealousy, honesty, loneliness, and so on. Through their behaviour in the stories, many valuable lessons are learned. Also, the surroundings in which the tales take place reveal the vastness of the land and educate the reader about the climate, such as the dry season (when it has not rained for several months), or the rainy season (when the hills are slick with mud). Acacia trees swaying in a gentle breeze, muddy streams that are home to fish, hippos and crocodiles, moss covered rocks, and giant ant hills that serve as a “back scratcher” for huge elephants, all give the reader a sense of the variety of life in the parched but lush land in this part of the world. (TeacherVision, 2000)

Among the common features of Philippine oral narratives, such as the folktales, is the use of animals as characters, a feature that is also evident in African folk tales. The folktale is defined as “a story that, in its plot, is pure fiction and that has no particular location in either time or space...it has the

element of fantasy... and a symbolic way of presenting the different means by which human beings cope with the world in which they live” (BaguioPhoria Community, 2015). The fable is a form of folktale. Specifically, its aim is to present a lesson “through some sort of animal story...that demonstrate a moral lesson at the end.” (Literary Devices, n.d.)

It is noteworthy that animal characters that feature in both African and Philippine folk literature include both crocodiles and monkeys. These animals appear to embody human values and characters.

### Aims and objectives

The purpose of this paper is to explore and compare the portrayal of female characteristics and domestic roles as embodied by animal characters in selected fables from South Africa and the Philippines. There is a need to give attention to the roles of women in South African and Philippine societies in order to examine their significant contribution to the preservation of cultural values and traditions, as well as to the advancement of education. Afisi (2010:229) pointed out that, “women have played leadership roles in the development of various African societies from pre-colonial days till now”. He further added that:

Even though the patriarchy system in Africa cannot be denied, yet, the African woman possesses the power that binds the society together. In traditional African society, the survival of the family and the future of marriage depended a great deal on the African woman. Thus, the African woman played a key role in the education and the teaching of children social, ethical and moral values, which were part of the cultural standards for evaluating proper societal behaviour.

In the Philippines, women are likewise provided similar opportunities and privileges in society. Their roles are considered to be essential in both the family and other institutions such as education. Asia Society (2019:1) notes that “reflections of the nation's recognition of the role and importance of women are evident on aspects such as justice, education, economics, politics and health.” The self-same authors further highlight that:

The country [the Philippines] has evolved from depicting women as only subservient and modest individuals to powerful nation builders and leaders... Compared to other parts of Southeast Asia, women in Philippine society have always enjoyed a greater share of equality.

This paper thus explores the commonalities in the roles of the females in both South African and Philippian cultural groups, which are reflective of women’s cultural experiences, and also reflects on how such analysis can form part of literature education.

Two fables are selected from the pool of Philippine folklore: *Lalapindigowa-i* (Why the Wasp has a Slim Waistline), and *Ang Butiki at ang kanyang inakay* (The Lizard and Her Young). Both fables come from the southern Philippine island of Mindanao; the first is a popular fable from the Maranao community derived from the research by E. Arsenio Manuel (1962). The latter is from the Manuvu community and based on the research of Dr. Nagasura Madale (2001). The two from South Africa

come from the Northern Sotho, which is one of the official languages. One of them is *Kgogo le Pekwa* (The Hen and the Crow) and the other is *Mokhudu le bana ba tau* (The Tortoise and the Lion's Cubs).

## Methodologies

In examining and analysing the contents of the folktale samples from the Philippines and South Africa, the qualitative research method, specifically document/textual analysis is applied. The discussion focuses on how the folktales show animal characters performing domestic roles and behaviours associated with women.

The functional approach is used in the discussion in finding out the social motive that lies behind the folktales (Marivate 1978:21). This approach, according to Cohen, et.al (2008:20), is concerned with how people make sense of their everyday world, by looking at people in their cultural setting, whereby their language, symbols, rituals and shared meanings define their worldview on issues (such as women's roles). The fables act as cautionary tales in which certain cultural practices are reinforced and cultural values are inculcated. For this, the paper also takes note of Dundes' (1962:95) diachronic approach, specifically the anthropological approach that highlights the "social motive that lies behind every folktale...where cautionary tales...reinforce taboos" (Johnston 1966:xii).

## The fables from the Philippines

Below are the two the fables from the Philippines, which were selected. These are stories that focus on the experiences of female animal characters as they perform their duties as wives and as parent.

### *Lalapindigowa-i* or Why the Wasp has a slim Waistline (retold in the words of Genevieve Quintero)

*Lalapindigowa-i*, the Wasp, tells of two wives, Orak (Egg) and Odang (Shrimp), who had to serve him, their husband. Every day, as *Lalapindigowa-i* went to work on the farm, both wives were tasked to prepare his meal, which they would bring to him. They got tired of this task, and so one day, both Orak and Odang argued as to who should bring his meal. Both refused to do it. In the midst of their argument, Odang accidentally fell into the pot of boiling water. Her skin turned red. Orak panicked and attempted to help Odang by reaching for her. But she too fell into the boiling water. Both wives were thus cooked. Meanwhile, *Lalapindigowa-i* waited impatiently for his meal. As he grew hungrier, he tightened his belt to appease the hunger pangs. When none of his wives arrived, he decided to go home and check. There he found out his wives were boiled to death. He was upset when he realized that their laziness had caused their demise. He then further tightened his belt, knowing that he no longer had wives who would cook his meals for him.

### *Ang Butiki at ang kanyang inakay* or The Lizard and Her Young (retold in the words of Genevieve Quintero)

This fable recounts the story of a mother, the Lizard, who seeks justice for the death of her baby. In the fable, the Lizard hires her friend, the Deer, to babysit her child while she goes to the river to

catch fish. She warns the Deer not to move too much lest she step on the young lizard and kill it. She then proceeds to the river to fish. While at the river, she hears a loud scream coming from her house and rushes back. When she arrives, she discovers the baby lizard dead on the floor. Agitated, she asks the Deer what happened. The Deer answers that she did not mean to step on the baby but that she was startled by the voice of the Mangawag bird. The sound made her accidentally step on the sleeping baby. The Lizard then tells the Deer to come with her and investigate. First, they go to the Mangawag bird and ask why she screamed. The bird replies that she screamed because she was frightened by the sound of the frantic tapping of the Woodpecker. The Lizard then demands that the bird accompany her and the Deer to the Woodpecker. When asked why she was tapping loudly, the Woodpecker replies that she got nervous upon seeing the Crocodile emerge from the river to put her jewellery on the banks to dry. The Lizard, Deer, Mangawag, and Woodpecker then proceed to the Crocodile. When interrogated, the Crocodile said she was worried because she saw the Shrimp going around with his rifle. Everyone then goes to find the Shrimp. When asked why he was going around with his rifle in a threatening manner, the Shrimp confesses that he was afraid because a Lizard was coming to get him, obviously to make him its meal. Upon hearing this, the Lizard was surprised and saddened upon realizing that the Shrimp was referring to her. She decided not to say a word and dismissed everyone. As she headed back to her home, she felt remorseful knowing that she had inadvertently caused her own child's demise.

### The fables from South Africa

Below are the two selected fables from South Africa. These are stories that similarly focus on the experiences of female animal characters.

*Mokhudu le bana ba tau* or The Tortoise and the Lion Cubs (retold in the words of Connie Makgabo)

The lioness once asked the tortoise to look after her three children while she went hunting. Although she had promised to bring food for the tortoise, she always just gave her some leftover bones. Since the tortoise could not eat to her satisfaction, she then decided to eat one of the lion cubs each day. In the evening when the lioness returned, she asked to see and feed her cubs. On the first day since there were only two children left, the tortoise brought one cub twice and the lioness was satisfied. The following day after eating the second one, the tortoise brought the lion cub to its mother thrice for feeding. All this time, the lioness believed that she was seeing and feeding each of her three cubs. On the third day, after eating the third cub, the tortoise went out to look for the baboons. She found them playing and singing. She used her tricks to teach the baboons a song, which implicated them in the killing of the lion cubs. The lyrics of the song stated that they, the baboons, killed and ate the lion cubs. But the baboons did not understand the words, so they thought it was just a fun song. And so they continued singing it. When the lioness returned home, she was furious to find that all her children were gone. The tortoise took her to the baboons who were still singing that song. Upon hearing the lyrics of the song, the lioness became furious and believed that the baboons were responsible for the demise of her cubs. So the lioness killed all the baboons as punishment for killing and eating her babies.

*Kgogo le Pekwa* or The Hen and the Crow (retold and in the words of Connie Makgabo)

A long time ago, the fable goes, the hen and the crow were reportedly very good friends. Their friendship was so strong that they were able to borrow anything from each other including household utensils. One day, the hen noticed that her children's hair had grown long, and she needed to cut them. Since she didn't have a pair of scissors, she went to her friend the crow to borrow one. Unfortunately after using the scissors, the hen lost them. Later that day, her friend the crow came to ask the hen for the scissors since she wanted to use them. The hen frantically looked everywhere for the item without success. This took a while and eventually the crow became angry at the hen for losing her scissors. In her anger, the crow ended their friendship and went on to tell the hen that as penalty for losing her pair of scissors, she would start eating her chicks. Since that day, the chickens are always seen digging around in the ground, looking for the scissors, while the crow feeds on the chicks.

**Discussion****Female Characters as Mother and Wife**

In all four fables, the female animal characters play the role of either wife or mother. The lion, hen, lizard, egg and shrimp are dominant characters. As mothers, the lion, hen, and lizard show concern and take responsibility for rearing their young and making certain they are nurtured and fed. In the fables, the mothers hunt and fish, as portrayed by the lion and lizard respectively. Even if they cannot always be around to personally look after their children, the lion and lizard hire other women and entrust their children to the care of others, while they go out and work at finding food to feed their young. The hen, on the other hand, looks after the well-being of her chicks. Because she personally cuts their hair, she needs to borrow a pair of scissors from her friend the crow. It is important to note that in both these fables, the father, or male parent, is absent. This single-working-mother phenomenon is all too common in modern South African and Philippine society. In the Philippines; these women are jokingly called *Ina-Tay*, a word that literally means Mother-Dad.

In the fable, *Lalapindigowa-i*, the female characters of the Egg and Shrimp portray women as wives, whose domestic role is to take care of the needs of their husbands. Most cultural communities are patriarchal, and thus, women are expected to make lives easier for men in the household, their husbands in particular. The fable also portrays women as wives in a polygamous marriage; they learn to co-exist, despite the rivalry, for the sake of their husband. While their husbands earn a living and feeds the families, the women take charge of preparing meals. In the fable, the wives become tired of this traditional role and try to break free from it. Although the decision causes their demise, it reveals that wives are not always comfortable being confined to traditional domestic roles.

This particular fable subtly highlights the sentiments of wives about their domestic roles. A sense of dissatisfaction is portrayed in the behaviour of Shrimp and Egg, who represent women in many traditional homes, especially those with limited opportunities. Further examination of fables from different cultures could provide a comparison of the portrayal and motivations of female characters within the domestic realm; thus increasing the relevance of the inclusion of folktales in the curriculum. Moreover, this will also aid in gender studies and research in higher education that seeks



to scrutinize how folktales reflect traditional roles of women. Among the aims of teaching about folktales at higher education level is the need to expose students to diverse cultures while at the same time comparing the historic cultures with contemporary ones.

### Female Characters as Friend and Confidante

Female characters in the fables play both major and supporting roles. The Lioness, Lizard, and Hen are portrayed as mothers. The Egg and Shrimp, on the other hand, are portrayed as wives. The other female characters in the fables include the Tortoise and the Deer, who are hired by the Lion and Lizard, respectively, to babysit their children. The Crow, on the other hand, is a friend to the Hen. These scenarios imply that women befriend each other based on mutual needs and responsibilities. In these fables, the friend and confidante, the babysitters in particular, are women. This also suggests that women tend to seek other women's assistance in the care of their children especially since "women were and still are viewed to be mothers, nurturers, household caretakers and caregivers" (Blanco 2016). According to Gran (2019:1), "women are the primary caretakers of children and elders in every country of the world... and play an important role in facilitating (or hindering) changes in family life".

Jorolan (2005:123), in her study on the perceived effects of education among female members of particular communities in the Philippines, observes:

Tradition has imposed roles for the female *lumad*, which are basically limited to the performance of domestic tasks...[they] recognize that the quality of life in their homes and their communities depend on their management skills. These roles include the female's responsibility to see to it that the needs of everyone are taken care of.

The fables infer that these qualities and abilities are expected of the female whether they are mothers themselves or not, especially in culturally traditional communities. Their inclusion in the higher education curriculum paves the way for broader examination of gender roles as reflected in the motivations and portrayals of both the female and male animal characters.

### Polygamy

There are two major religions in the Philippines, namely, Christianity and Islam. These religions differ in the marital principles they advocate. While Christians practice monogamy, Muslims practice polygamy. De Los Angeles (1965) notes that non-Christian indigenous communities, like the Apayao in the northern island of Luzon, and the Muslim communities in the south, practice polygamy. This marriage custom is referred to in the fable *Lalapindigowa-i*, where the Wasp has two wives, the Egg and the Shrimp. The Maranao, where the fable originates, is a Muslim community in the southern island of Mindanao. In this fable, polygamy is seen as a source of additional labour in the household for domestic activities. Women undertake domestic roles jointly, such as cooking, so as to lighten the workload. Polygamy has also come to be seen as a means of satisfying the sexual needs of both men and women, in that women outnumber men in many communities (Amone & Arao 2014).

### Common features in the fables

Several similarities are observed in these fables from the Philippines and South Africa, these include: (1) All characters in are occupied with hunting, farming, and fishing. Except for fishing, hunting and farming are shared by the Lion in the South African fable and the Wasp in the Philippine fable. Fishing, the occupation of the Lizard, is a common occupation of people in the islands of the Philippines, a country composed of several islands, which South Africa is not.

(2) All the female animals perform domestic and care-giving duties. The main characters in the fables are individual women, who play the roles of mother and wife. The Lion, Lizard, and Hen are single parents looking after their children and work to feed them. The Egg and Shrimp are, on the other hand, housewives, who take care of the household needs. The Deer and the Tortoise are babysitters.

A mother's life is multi-faceted. The folktales portray mothers and wives as having the responsibility to attend to the well-being and needs of their family. These domestic concerns include upkeep of their homes, the welfare of their spouse and family, and the education, health and well-being of their children. The folktales also depict mothers as the foundation that a home is built upon since their primary role is often seen as providing a home for their families and to provide a safe and secure environment in which their children can grow and flourish.

### Folktales in the curriculum

Storytelling has been utilized as an effective mode of transmitting knowledge since pre-historic times. This is attested by the oral traditions, such as folktales and fables that remain among cultural communities all over the world. This method has been adopted in educational curricula in formal educational institutions, not only in literature classes but also in social science curricula, and even in the sciences. It is evident from the available published materials that oral literature is rich in both South Africa and the Philippines "for many centuries and takes a variety of forms including folk tales, myths, epics, funeral dirges, praise poems, and proverbs" (Exploring Africa, 2020:1). Bascom (1965: 292-294) states that folklore may:

mirror familiar details of culture, and incorporate common situations from everyday life...that it validates culture, in justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them... [and it plays an important role] in education, particularly, but not exclusively, in nonliterate societies...and (it) fulfils the important but often overlooked function of maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behaviour.

Clavel (1970:1) stresses that "the transmission of folklore from one generation to another is an indication of functional communication". He provides a brief background and history of African literature:

Oral literary forms must not be conceptualized as simply pre-colonial, ancient, or traditional. Oral literary forms, such as folktales and praise-songs, flourish in contemporary Africa. For example, performances of oral tales are featured on radio, television, and in films. Oral literature is performed and created by women and men, and many African written literary expressions incorporate the forms and tropes of oral literature. (Module Eleven Background, 2020:1)

Likewise folktales and folklore can aid teaching and learning when integrated into the curriculum. In teaching using these folktales, an inquiry approach to teaching and learning can be followed. Such an approach is student-centred, in that it elicits students' understandings. In so doing, students are able to delve deeper into their own learning and understandings of their cultures.

According to Sturm and Nelson (2018), folktales are examples that can enable students to explore different ways of dealing with domestic challenges - in both South Africa and the Philippines. Although the two countries are far apart, there are similarities when it comes to domestic roles and female responsibilities. Interpretation of folktales, according to Propp's (2012) oral literacy theory, can be applied to assist students apply learning to their daily lives. Through storytelling, people are able to encode and share knowledge across cultures and histories. Even in the contemporary era, people use folktales to relate to their own world.

### Conclusion

All the fables in this paper foreground feminine roles such as being a mother, wife, babysitter, and domestic care-taker. Despite differences in their geographical features, South Africa and the Philippines share various similarities in their folk literature:

- (1) The animals that are common in the region are used as main characters in the stories. These animal characters are derived from actual animals, seen in either domestic or wild surroundings that the audience can readily identify with and relate to.
- (2) The folktale plots revolve around household settings, involving family and domestic relations (husband and wife, parent and children, friendships), which reflect universal human situations.
- (3) The four folktales reveal the significant roles of women, especially in the domestic realm, as mothers, wives, and confidantes. Despite the significant cultural differences between South Africa and the Philippines, these roles are consistent.
- (4) The folktales have both entertainment and instructive value. Their entertainment value is derived from the use of animals as characters representing human nuances; while their instructive value lies not only in the moral lessons that are embedded in each tale but, more importantly, in their potential to provide a broader, critical view on cultural values and traditions, such as in the form of gender roles.

### Recommendation

Fables are able to preserve the significant values and worldviews of cultural communities. Although there has been substantial publication of fables from all over the world in recent years, there is still a vast treasury of these stories that need to be recorded. The following are thus recommended:

- (1) Encouraged and support research that aims to collect and record fables from indigenous communities in South Africa and the Philippines, as well as elsewhere in the world.
- (2) Based on such research, the dissemination – both in academic and entertainment forms (book publications, conference presentations, performances) – should be promoted.

- (3) More research that deals with comparative discussion of folktales should be encouraged and supported. Other folklore genres such as myths, legends, riddles, and proverbs should also be explored.
- (4) Papers inspired by folklore research and indigenous studies that examine issues of gender roles and their implications in the global South and North should be written and published.
- (5) Collaborative studies in the field of folk literature should be encouraged to include various communities from multiple countries.
- (6) Folktales should be taught at all levels of education, especially in higher education, where there is a broader platform for research and analysis involving socio-cultural perspectives, and the dissemination of information on cultural and indigenous knowledge systems.

**Funding sources:**

University of the Philippines in Mindanao, Davao City, Philippines  
 Research Development Program (RIDP) Fund, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

**Acknowledgments:**

Our heartfelt gratitude to:

SOTLitS for the opportunity to share this paper.  
 The Storytellers and the Keepers of Cultural Traditions in the Philippines and South Africa.  
 The Folklorists and Cultural Researchers.  
 The late Mmanoko Matlou Chokoe.  
 The University of the Philippines and the University of Pretoria.

**References**

- Afisi, O.T. 2010. Folklore, language and society: The ethical relevance. Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305075438\\_Folklore\\_Language\\_and\\_Society\\_The\\_Ethical\\_Relevance](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305075438_Folklore_Language_and_Society_The_Ethical_Relevance). Accessed on: 01 April 2020.
- Amone, C. and Arao, M. 2014. The values of polygamy among the Langi People of Northern Uganda. *Religion*, 12(5), p.6.
- Bascom, W. R. 1965. Four Functions of Folklore. In Alan Dundes, ed., *The Study of Folklore*. New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Blanco, L. 2016. Domestic duties? What roles do men and women take on today? Available: <http://panthernow.com/2016/02/25/61999>. Accessed on: 20 February 2020.
- Brunvand, JH. 1968. *The study of American folklore: An introduction*. New York: WW Norton.
- Clavel, L.S. 1970. Folklore and Communication. Available: <https://www.asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-08-02-1970/clavel-folklore-communication.pdf>. Accessed on: 18 February 2020.
- Cohen, AJ., Mori-Sánchez P & Yang W. 2008. "Insights into current limitations of density functional theory." *Science* 321, no. 5890: 792-794.
- De Los Angeles, N. 1965. "Marriage and Fertility Patterns in the Philippines." *Philippine Sociological Review* 13, no. 4: 232-248.
- Dundes, A. 1962. "From etic to emic units in the structural study of folktales." *The Journal of American Folklore* 75, no. 296 : 95-105.
- Fables*. Literary Devices: Definition and Examples of Literary Terms. Available: <https://literarydevices.net/fable/>. Accessed on: 15 March 2020.
- Finnegan, R. 1970. "A note on oral tradition and historical evidence."

- Godinez-Ortega, C.F. The literary forms in Philippine literature." Available: [http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Literature/literary\\_forms\\_in\\_philippine\\_lit.htm](http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Literature/literary_forms_in_philippine_lit.htm). Accessed on: 01 April 2020.
- Gran, M. 2019. The global role of women – caretakers, conscience, farmers, educators and entrepreneurs. Global Volunteers. Available: <https://globalvolunteers.org/global-role-of-women/>. Accessed on: 27 March 2020.
- Johnston, HAS, (ed). 1966. A selection of Hausa stories. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Jorolan, G.T. 2005. Perceived effects of education among female members of the Ata Manobo, Mandaya, and Mansaka communities in the Davao region. Banwa Vol 2 Number 1. University of the Philippines Mindanao.
- Madale, NT. (n.d.) Lalapindigowa-i: Kung Bakit Maliit ang Baywang ng Putakti (Pabula ng Maranao). Available: [https://www.kapitbisig.com/philippines/tagalog-version-of-fables-mga-pabula-lalapindigowa-i-kung-bakit-maliit-ang-beywang-ng-putakti-pabula-ng-maranao\\_1026.html](https://www.kapitbisig.com/philippines/tagalog-version-of-fables-mga-pabula-lalapindigowa-i-kung-bakit-maliit-ang-beywang-ng-putakti-pabula-ng-maranao_1026.html). Accessed on: 18 February 2020.
- Makgamatha, P. 1993. "The Writing of Folklore." In A paper read at the Maskew Miller Longman workshop on folklore.
- Manuel, EA. 1962. Upland Bagobo Narratives. Quezon City: University of the Philippines.
- Marivate, CTD. 1978. "Tsonga folktales." Second Africa languages.
- Module Eleven Background: A brief background and history of African literature. Available: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/module-eleven-background/>. Accessed on: 18 February 2020.
- Owomoyela, O. 1979. African literatures: an introduction. Waltham, Mass, African Studies Association. (as cited in <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/module-eleven-background/>)
- Propp, V.Y. 2012. The Russian Folktale by Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp. Wayne State University Press.
- Sturm, B.W. and Nelson, S.B. 2018. What Can Folktales Teach Us about Higher Education Teaching?. Storytelling, Self, Society, 13(2), p.3.
- TeacherVision Staff. 2000. African Folk Tales: Background Information. *TeacherVision*. Available: <https://www.teachervision.com/african-folk-tales-background-information>. Accessed on: 26 March 2020.
- Women in the Philippines: Inspiring and Empowered. *Asia Society: Philippines*. Available: <https://asiasociety.org/philippines/women-philippines-inspiring-and-empowered>. Accessed on: 01 April 2020.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>