



Archetypes of Evil: Illustrations of Society's Collective Behavior

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Abstract

This study ventures into the mysterious domain of Filipino folklore that shows the potency of oral traditions to project archetypes of evil that persist to mold the collective behavior of a group of people. This study investigated the oral tales of ungu in rural Bohol, specifically in the towns of Inabanga, Calape, Loon, Maribojoc, and Cortes. This employed ethnographic fieldwork by interviewing mature native residents to recount these tales. Using the Jungian archetypal lens, six oral tales of ungu were retrieved and analyzed for the hidden ethnic archetypes of evil, which reveal the ungu in different forms: bird, wild boar or pig, and wakwak. These archetypes reveal the following signified antecedents, including dependence on folk medicine, repulsion towards blood and deviant behavior, and protective instincts towards family and community members. These signified antecedents shape the Boholano psyche: the Boholano places importance on preserving and protecting life and the continuity of the Boholano society. This study provides an interpretive framework that sheds light on how oral narratives about a local monster may function as mechanisms for psychological and social stability within ethnic identities.

1. Introduction

The oral traditions of the Filipinos are an essential inheritance preserved, as this reflects the richness of the experiences, beliefs, and ideals of the pre-colonial Filipinos. As Bronner (2007) argues, oral traditions essentially mirror the collective consciousness and cultural identity of a group of people, which serves as a reservoir of cultural norms and collective values. Since the primary medium of transmission of their forefathers' creative works was by word of mouth, this implies a long history of listeners.

Among orally transmitted literary creations of their forefathers, their folk narratives easily captivate the minds and hearts of their listeners. This penchant for folk tales is prevalent among the many ethnic groups in the country since it was inherent among the pre-colonial Filipinos and still is for the modern Filipinos; the habit and love of storytelling, an art considered one of the most important characteristics of the human race. And since their archipelagic nation is a composite of various ethnic groups, they not only protect one body of oral tradition, but also maintain differing ethnic oral traditions.

A perfect example of this is the paradise-like island province of Bohol, located in this archipelagic nation's central part of the Visayas region. Unknown to many Filipinos, this island is a fertile field for folklore. Pajo (1954), in her *Boholano Folklore*, proves that when she went around the province, people eagerly volunteered to tell stories connected with a tree, hill, mountain, or any other object of interest at every stop. Anyone would gladly point to certain

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features of the land with which a story has been associated and tell the story. Part of the traditional learning of the Boholanos is the belief in the existence of *ungu*, as reflected in many of their oral tales. Presently, such oral tales of *ungu* are part of the oral tradition in many rural parts of Bohol. Pajo (1954) testifies that Boholanos believe in the existence of *ungu*—an imaginary monster that eats people.

Boholanos' conviction in the existence of the *ungu* is evident in their fascinating tales about this midnight creature and its activities, which they transmit to each other orally. According to Tangherlini (2018), people tend to make meaning of events by telling stories, even if those events still have to be proven. Tangherlini (2018) further reasons that even in this age of technological advancement and the internet, such narratives endure because they help communities navigate their fears and reaffirm their shared belief systems.

Whether such a creature exists in reality remains unresolved; thus, anyone can reject such an assumption. However, the significance of the role of oral tales of the *ungu* in the culture of the Boholanos should be addressed. Since oral tales, especially those recounting encounters between the Boholanos and the *ungu*, are fundamentally part of Boholano folklore, it is imperative to explore this dimension of Boholano society. For one thing, folklore is considered autobiographical ethnography, which is the people's description of themselves (Dundes & Bronner, 2007).

While published research covering Filipino folklore exists, there remains a gap in the study of how regional literature, specifically oral tales about the Boholano *ungu*, which is an archetype of evil in different forms.

According to Siwakoti (2017), in literature and folklore, one can delineate the concept of the collective unconscious, archetypal symbols, and archetypes as proposed by Jung in analytical psychology. Furthermore, Jung posits that in its truest form, art contains the whole human race's basic archetypal emotion; art draws in the collective unconscious, not the personal unconscious (Siwakoti, 2017). Hence, this study positions the oral tales of the *ungu* as a projection of the collective unconscious of the Boholano people, who believe that the *ungu* is more than just an archetype of evil.

Anchored on Jung's analytical psychology, this study employs archetypal criticism, which aims to examine the oral tales of the *ungu* that project the collective unconscious of the Boholano. The archetypes are labeled as ethnic because their meanings are culturally exclusive to the Boholano people. Based on these ethnic archetypes, this research aims to explore their meanings or representations to synthesize the collective behavior of the Boholano people. Thus, this study not only illustrates the literary value but also the sociocultural implications of the *ungu* narratives. This investigation focuses on the *ungu* narratives that thrive in the towns of Calape, Loon, Maribojoc, Cortes, and Inabanga, specifically addressing the following objectives:

1. What tales of the *ungu* are part of the oral traditions in these Boholano communities?
2. What ethnic archetypes in these oral tales project the Boholano collective behavior?
3. What image of the superstitious Boholano can be synthesized from these archetypes?

This paper first establishes the theoretical foundations for archetypal criticism and the cultural signification of monsters in societies. After which, it elaborates on the ethnographic approach to the collection of the tales to maintain the authenticity of the narratives that will be subject to archetypal examination. The main nucleus of this paper is the archetypal analysis of the oral narratives of *ungu*, underscoring the different archetypes and what each signifies of

the collective behavior of the Boholano. As a final point, this paper discusses the implications of the findings for further folkloric and cultural identity studies.

2. Literature Review

Archetypal Criticism

To scrutinize a literary work's mimetic quality, one executes the role of a critic who judges it based on the "truth" of its representation of the world's reality and human life and character. In the context of this study, the exact mechanism will be employed for the oral tales of ungu—the primary data to be examined. Thus, the researcher's main challenge is locating the textual meaning of the oral tales of the ungu in the reality or nature represented by them. This approach can be accomplished by underscoring and elucidating the archetypes hidden in each tale. This method of interpreting literature is formally known as archetypal criticism.

According to Henderson and Brown (1997), archetypal criticism is a form of criticism which is based on the psychology of Carl Jung, who argues that there are two levels of the unconscious: the personal, which comprises repressed memories that are part of an individual's psyche and the archetypal which comprises the racial memory of a collective unconscious, a storehouse of images and patterns, vestigial traces of which inhere all human beings and which find symbolic expression in all human art. As a matter of fact, Hume (1984) suggests that fantastical stories or fantasy function as a mimetic reaction to reality. Through this mechanism, societies process psychological distress through the creation of supernatural tales.

Between the two, the personal unconscious is more superficial than the collective unconscious, which is viewed as much more profound. The personal unconscious is self-defining and does not need to be perceived as mysterious or supernatural (though it is occult in the truest sense of the word—"hidden"). According to Siwakoti (2017), in literature and folklore, one can delineate the concept of collective unconscious, archetypal symbols, and archetypes as proposed by Jung in analytical psychology. Hence, this study positions the oral tales of the *ungu* as a projection of the collective unconscious of the Boholano people, who believe that the *ungu* is more than just an archetype of evil. The *ungu*, for them, is a manifestation of the personified evil. On the other hand, Keesey (1998) posits that an archetypal framework enables researchers the opportunity to view individual texts as part of a narrative architecture.

Archetypes

Nurani and Amelia (2024) postulate that one can find and explore archetype phenomena in literature. In addition, Nurani and Amelia consider archetypes explored in the literature essential, since they can guide and change how we view the world and shape how we see ourselves (2024). It is also important to note that Abrams-Harpham (as cited in Nurani and Amelia, 2024) asserts that archetypes are models in the human mind that take the shape of different symbolic and narrative forms.

Pettifor (1995) adds that an archetype contains things that can be made conscious by a simple act of will, things that require some digging, and things that may never be recalled to consciousness again. The collective unconscious, though pretty much self-defining, is not an exclusive property of an individual but is shared by everyone. In other words, it belongs to the species. The collective unconscious cannot be built up like one's personal unconscious; rather, it predates the individual. It is the repository of all religious, spiritual, and mythological symbols and experiences.

Recent literature has advanced these classical theories. In fact, archetypes have evolved in socio-cultural landscapes. According to Gülüm (2023), folkloric memory functions as cultural stability, and in this form of stability, archetypal images are shaped and reshaped to address modern-day social anxieties. For Jung, archetypes were the conceptual matrices or patterns behind our religious and mythological concepts and our thinking processes in general. Furthermore, Jung interprets his archetypes in a biological sense. He says (no doubt due to the Darwinian influence of his age) that they are inherited and have existed since the remotest times (Karakas & Karaaziz, 2024). On the other hand, Daly (2020) argues for the continued applicability of the theory of Jung in the field of folklore, specifically folk literature, which suggests that the *ungu*, an archetypal symbol, can be instrumental in exploring the multifaceted nature of the collective human experience in localized contexts.

Archetypal Characters

Carl Jung, the leading proponent of archetypal criticism and the creator of the term archetype, reminds us that humankind has a collective consciousness, made evident in dreams and myths, and harbors themes and images we all inherit. Existing from culture to culture, these archetypes lend structure to work and are often utilized in one way or another by artists to convey profound aspects of the universal human experience; thus, these patterns help achieve long-lasting appeal in literary works.

In addition to that, Delahoyde (2002) acknowledges that archetypes are unknowable basic forms personified or concretized in recurring images, symbols, or patterns, which may include motifs such as the quest or the heavenly ascent, recognizable character types such as the trickster or the hero, symbols such as the apple or snake, or images such as crucifixion (as in King Kong, or Bride of Frankenstein)—all laden with meaning already when employed in a particular work.

Therefore, archetypal symbols may be found in many works of literature, representing various emotions and aspirations of humankind's ancestral psychological heritage. In this case, archetypal literary criticism is understood as the study of such symbols in literature. These symbols, in particular, are in three categories: (1) archetypal characters, (2) archetypal situations, and (3) archetypal symbols and associations.

These archetypes are basic symbols and realities of human existence throughout all major cultures and historical periods (Jewell, 2002). In other words, these archetypes refer to figures or patterns that recur in the works of imagination from generation to generation.

In other words, no matter when or where humans have existed, they have had essentially the same kinds of cultural symbols: for example, the sun father, the moon love goddess, the earth mother, several kinds of heroes and heroines, animal symbols, and the like (Jewell, 2002). For Frye (as cited in Henderson and Brown, 1997), an archetype is a symbol, usually an image, that recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience. These archetypes are basic symbols and realities for human existence throughout major cultures and historical periods (Jewell, 2002).

The Monster as a Cultural Manifestation and Psychological Defense Mechanism

The idea of monsters being physical manifestations, not just creations of the imagination, represents taboos and anxieties that are cultural in nature. This is supported by Asma (2020), who introduces the monster's cultural body, anchored on the concept of archetypes, specifically those representing evil. Asma (2020) illustrates that animals or beings that violate human

spaces are believed to symbolize societal fears associated with transgressions that are social and moral in nature.

Such a viewpoint offers understanding of how creatures or animals, such as birds, pigs, or wolves, are referred to as symbols of evil. The unnatural behaviors or intrusions into domestic spaces by these entities reflect a community's collective fears about order, peace, safety, and purity. Hence, the monster, in this perspective, stands as a cultural entity that helps a community, in the context of this study, the Boholanos, handle, react, and pronounce their deepest fears and socio-moral boundaries.

On another note, these monsters are deemed as archetypal images that operate with artistic, emotional, and philosophical functions within the narratives in which they are located (Zhanysbekova et al., 2024). The act of associating monsters with liminal spaces serves as a mental representation of distinguishing what is safe and what is not, and this perspective is situated within the cultural landscapes to which such monsters are identified (Zagar, 2024). In other words, the identification of these monsters in oral narratives lays the framework for the psychological defense mechanism of a group of people. Such a cultural knowledge system equips and prepares a community on how to respond to threats perceived by society. These systems are considered protective behaviors that are culturally encoded and communicated through a community's oral traditions.

With a unique evil monster—ethnically specific to the Boholanos—at the center of this study, the aforementioned theories provide a robust framework for understanding the presence of malevolent characters in oral narratives. In this specific case, this study tests the applicability of the theories to delineate the socio-cultural implications of the *ungu* within the Boholano collective behavior.

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a dual methodological approach. This research utilized ethnographic fieldwork for the data collection and content analysis, with archetypal criticism for data interpretation. Ethnographic field research was employed to retrieve and study the oral tales of the *ungu* in the selected towns of Calape, Loon, Maribojoc, Cortes, and Inabanga. Using ethnography as a research method allowed the researcher to take a cultural lens to study the people's lives within their communities, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) and Fetterman (2010). Moreover, ethnographic research, as a process of collecting data about a group of people, helps us understand how and why people behave differently in various societies and cultures.

The researcher, who took on the role of an ethnographer, spotlighted a particular social phenomenon occurring in the communities in the aforementioned selected towns. In this context, using a micro-ethnographic lens, the researcher zoomed into the collective behavior of the Boholano as reflected in the collected oral tales of *ungu*.

Key Informants

Since ethnographic fieldwork is the method in this research, it entails the researcher obtaining data from key informants in the form of tales, conversations, dialogue, or speech. The researcher employed the interview technique to retrieve unrecorded oral tales of *ungu* from key informants who were carefully selected based on the following criteria: (1) must be a native

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or resident for more than 10 years in the municipality where the oral tale was retrieved, (2) must be a mature participant with age ranging from 35 years old and above, (3) must speak the Boholano dialect, and (4) must be a firsthand witness or secondhand knowledge recipient of the oral tale. These criteria are crucial for the selection of storytellers of accounts involving the *ungu* to attain and maintain the authenticity of the narrative to be coming from individuals whose expert narration of the tales contributes to the researcher randomly selecting and approaching key informants leisurely, passing the time at the town plaza, gym, market, barangay, town hall, or church.

Data Collection

In executing this method, the researcher underwent three phases: (1) collection and decoding of data, (2) content analysis of data, and (3) interpretation of data. During the interview, the researcher asked the key informants to narrate the oral tales from beginning to end in their Boholano Visayan language. This method entailed the researcher obtaining the six oral tales from informants in the form of tales, conversations, dialogues, or speeches.

These retrieved oral tales have gained prominence in the oral traditions centering on supernatural creatures among the townsfolk and have still been circulating in the communities of these towns up to the point of retrieval by the researcher. While the key informants who relayed these stories to the researcher have various versions of these oral tales, the researcher considered the details consistently delivered orally. This way, the researcher could transcribe and document the written form of each oral tale.

Research Rigor

To authenticate the retrieval and sources of the oral tales of *ungu*, audiovisual recording devices—a video camera and a unidirectional microphone—were utilized to record the interviews with the research informants. After this, the recorded interviews were edited for a clean and well-organized presentation of the materials. These recorded oral tales were decoded first in print in their original Boholano-Visayan language and later translated into English.

Although the researcher is not foreign to Boholano oral traditions, specifically of tales featuring the *ungu* as the central character, the researcher had to maintain a critical distance, especially in the interpretation of the narratives, to avoid casting biases. Moreover, the researcher adhered to ethical considerations by informing the key informants of the objectives of the study and their rights to withdraw at any time when they felt the need. Before the interviews were conducted, informed consent was acquired from the participants. Most importantly, their anonymity and confidentiality were protected by the researcher by employing pseudonyms and securely handling the obtained data from them.

Data Analysis

Specifically, the researcher employed content analysis to identify the ethnic archetypes of each oral tale. The English version of the oral tales of the *ungu* served as the primary data for content analysis. In conducting the content analysis, the researcher utilized archetypal criticism to identify the ethnic archetypes reflected in these oral tales of the *ungu*. From these ethnic archetypes, the researcher delineated their meanings to synthesize the collective behavior of the Boholanos in light of their belief in the *ungu*.

4. Results and Discussion

***Ungu*: A Manifestation of Evil**

This study illuminates the *ungu* as an archetype of evil rooted in the experiences of the Boholano. In the case of the oral narratives acquired by the researcher, the tales reveal the *ungu* as a manifestation of evil interwoven in the superstitious beliefs of specific municipalities in the island province of Bohol.

Although the Boholanos have yet to establish the truth behind the existence of the *ungu* with evidential proof since this creature of the night has remained only the subject of hearsay and oral tales, their belief in the *ungu* implies that, as an ethnic group, they have a collective conception of what is evil. For the Boholanos, evil manifests itself physically to actualize its true nature in the image of the *ungu*. This notion coincides with the fact that most people cite a physical force represented by some entity as a witness to their belief in evil. As a matter of fact, "the devil," "Satan," or "Lucifer" are some of the most common names that people in Western and Eastern nations will quote as evidence for evil (Ucadia, 2007).

Such assertion holds relevance, especially in the context of this study, which centers on one of the most interesting genres of the oral tradition of the Boholanos—the oral tales of the *ungu*. These oral tales, which highlight the mysterious and terrifying nature of the *ungu*, have captured and enlivened the imagination of the Boholanos. Also, these oral tales have sharpened and enriched their literary experience as they are transported to a realm that heightens their imagination, impresses them with frightening notions, and illustrates pictures of the *ungu*. Nevertheless, the Boholanos have constructed a supernatural figure to materialize the existence of evil in the persona of the *ungu*. The *ungu*, therefore, is a symbolic representation of evil. This study recognizes the *ungu* as the primary archetype of oral tales.

Sub-archetypes of Ungu

As revealed in the collected oral narratives of the *ungu*, each tale shows the *ungu* as a materialization of evil that comes in different forms. In Boholano folklore, an *ungu* is a midnight creature. In the context of this study, the term *ungu* is posed as an umbrella term from which other forms of *ungu* diverge. Hence, these other forms of *ungu* are treated as sub-archetypes of evil. Oral tales collected in Calape reveal two forms of the *ungu*, the bird in *Ang Dugu gikan sa Ungu* (Blood from the Ungu) and the wild boar in *Ang Mistiryusu'ng Babuy* (The Mysterious Pig). Whereas the oral tales, *Ang Tambalan ug Ang Wakwak* (The Folk Doctor and the Wakwak) from Cortes, *Ingkwintru sa Wakwak* (The Encounter with a Wakwak) from Inabanga, *Si Uray Itas* (Uray Itas) from Loon, and *Bugnu* (Catfight) from Maribojoc showcase the *wakwak*, which is the female term to refer to the *ungu*.

Sub-archetype 1: *Daku nga Langgam* (A Large Bird)

Oral Tale of Ungu 1: *Ang Dugu gikan sa Ungu* (The Blood from the Ungu)

This tale recounts the unexpectedly surprising encounter of the couple with an *ungu* while fishing in the sea at dawn. Based on the incident, the couple was surprised upon finding out that what the husband initially thought were raindrops were drops of blood that had fallen on their hats. To verify the source of the blood, the husband immediately looked up and saw a flying creature—a large bird. Instinctively, the husband presumed that the large bird was the main source of the blood and was not an ordinary type but an *ungu* taking such form to conceal its identity. The husband believed that the *ungu* had just preyed on its victim. This clearly dismisses the possibility that the bird could have just been wounded or holding prey between its beaks. However, this presumption was drawn out after the husband associated the large bird with its direction of flying to Panggangan Island from the Cinubcuban bridge, which was believed to be the waiting area of an *ungu*. This narrative underscores the idea of the synergistic

contribution of local beliefs and environmental cues to the formation of archetypal figures of evil, especially within the community (Geertz, 1973).

Although the Cinubcuban bridge has to be verified if it is a waiting area of an *ungu*, the presumption that the large bird is an *ungu* is not only attributed to the idea that the large bird induced anxiety and fear in the couple, but also the idea that the blood, believed to be from the large bird, is associated with violence. Ergo, the large bird is purely evil, as it poses a possible threat to the couple, especially to the mother and her future child.

Sub-archetype 2: *Babuy* (A Wild Boar)

Oral Tale of *Ungu* 2: *Ang Mistiryusu'ng Babuy* (The Mysterious Pig)

The large, wild pig that intruded on the house of the family in this occurrence was instinctively presupposed as an *ungu*. This supposition was arrived at based on its unexplained trespassing of the house, which was viewed by the family as bizarre for a domesticated or wild pig to carry out. What fueled the intensity of their presumption was the unreasonable climbing up of the pig to the second floor of the house, which led the family members to suspect that its main intention was probably to harm the pregnant household member. Furthermore, another occurrence that solidified the presumption of the family members that the pig was an *ungu* was its untraceable disappearance after the grandfather counteracted its presence by striking the tail of a sting ray on a house post, and a shout of a person was heard.

Although this pig could be considered a stray animal, its bizarre behavior caused distress to all members of the family, which eventually disrupted their peace and order temporarily. In addition, its presence in the house posed a threat to the safety of all household members. Since the pig displayed malevolent tendencies in this happening, the pig qualifies as evil in nature; thus, its image is portrayed as an *ungu* having a wicked intention to carry out by camouflaging as a pig. Misslin (2003) reinforces this idea of oral tales about threatening entities to perform the function of a psychological defense mechanism for groups or communities. Through these tales, they are able to manifest and navigate their fears.

Sub-archetype 3: *Wakwak* (The Female *Ungu*)

Oral Tale of *Ungu* 3: *Ang Tambalan ug ang Wakwak* (The Folk Doctor and the *Wakwak*)

This tale exhibits the fight between the narrator, Cesar Galapin, the male folk doctor, as the good element, and the old woman identified as a *wakwak*, as the evil element. The image of the old woman is coated with an evil quality as it is recognized by the folk doctor as an example of a *wakwak* because of what she committed in the incident. This is based on the following details of the attack of the old woman: a. the old woman initiated the fight late at night and a less conspicuous area, b. the old woman stepped back and waited for the folk doctor to come out of the passageway before attacking him, c. the old woman raised her arms as it attempted to attack her supposed victim, and the folk doctor obtained a potion from the old woman, which was believed by the folk doctor to be the source of her evil powers.

Though the folk doctor may be biased in his conviction that the old woman who attacked him was a *wakwak*, his disposition as a folk doctor with special magical abilities allows him to immediately and even instinctively identify his female attacker as a *wakwak*. Not only that, the folk doctor recognized the bizarre and wicked actions of the old woman. Furthermore, the folk doctor sensed that the old woman had hidden three bottles of potion in certain parts of her body.

Thus, these characteristics mold the old woman into a supernatural being with evil motives. The capability of the doctor to reveal the identity of the old woman as a *wakwak* aligns with Mwaka et al.'s (2023) assertion that folk healers possess special abilities that allow them to recognize and engage with entities that belong to the supernatural realm. Such a capacity is usually passed down to the coming generations to perpetuate the presence of folk healers in the community.

Oral Tale of Ungu 4: *Si Uray Itas* (Uray Itas)

What is uniquely interesting in this three-part tale is that the pivotal character, Uray Itas, was believed to be a *wakwak*. This allegation was fueled by the diagnosis of a folk doctor from the town of Calape, that Uray Itas could no longer be treated for her illness since she already had the attribute of being a *wakwak*. Moreover, a creature inside her has begun to sprout hair, which implies that as this creature grows further inside her body, her powers will grow stronger as an evil being.

Such a diagnosis was formulated based on the bizarre behavior displayed by Uray Itas, her recurring unexplainable headache and fever, the black cloth she buried in a pile of stones, her initial attempts to ambush her victims at deserted areas, and inexplicable appearance of insects and two crows on the first night of her wake. Such characteristics demonstrated by Uray Itas became the primary concern of her family, relatives, friends, and neighbors, for her strange actions caused them distress, fear, and panic. These emotional reactions paved the way for the concerned individuals to suppose that the mother persona of Uray Itas had been transformed into an evil image. In other words, her deviant behavior brought about fear in them about any possibility of her harming them physically and staining their reputation. Primarily, her deviance from normal behavior shaped her into a potentially evil individual. When certain individuals display deviant behavior—similar to that of Uray Itas—they are believed to upset social norms, which often elicits strong reactions from community members. This usually leads the community to ostracize and perceive the individual to be a threat (Hodge et al., 2002).

Oral Tale of Ungu 5: *Pakig-Ingkwintru sa Wakwak* (Encounter with a *Wakwak*)

Sharing similar elements with the tale, *Ang Tambalan ug ang Wakwak* (The Folk Doctor and the *Wakwak*), such as the first-person point of view narration, depiction of a fight between good and evil, and the triumph of good over evil, this tale indicates a different picture of a fight between good and evil forces—the good force is the narrator himself who is an ordinary palm toddy gatherer and the evil force is the woman who shape-shifted from being a bird who swooped the palm toddy gatherer.

In this case, the woman who attacked the palm toddy gatherer is believed to be evil in nature because of her unquestionable motive of attacking her male victim, with whom she had no relations at all. Such action primarily qualifies as evil since it is morally reprehensible. Furthermore, her evil disposition is cast with a supernatural attribute as she pranced like a cock in attacking the palm toddy gatherer, shape-shifted from that bird that swooped down on the male victim twice, and surprised the palm toddy gatherer when her hair stood up, and her skirt was blown up before executing the attack. Hence, she is presumed to be a *wakwak* seeking human prey. Garry (2017) points out that in some cultures, the ability of an individual to shift into different shapes is a well-known motif in folklore. Oftentimes, this is viewed as a representation of transgression of natural and moral boundaries.

Oral Tale of Ungu 6: *Ang Bugnu* (The Fight)

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The unidentified attacker in this incident is alleged to be a *wakwak*, according to the presumption of the female toddy vendor. This conclusion about the supernatural identity of the old female attacker is drawn on the basis that the female attacker executed the ambush at a remote and lonely spot in the late part of the evening. The female attacker had no relations and had no unsettled conflict with the victim; the female attacker used her fingernails to cause harm to her victim instead of using a deadly weapon if she had a plan to kill her immediately and immediately escape from the venue of ambush so as not to be identified by the passerby.

Both the mysterious nature and the evil actions executed at a questionable time and place by the female attacker shape her identity as not an ordinary being that runs amok, but as a supernatural evil being known as a *wakwak*. Nuzum (2004) confirms this by positing that remote locations at night are often portrayed, in folklore, as places where the supernatural and the natural meet.

Collective Behavior of the Superstitious Boholano Toward Evil

The *ungu* is an archetype of evil experienced by the Boholano society in general, and that experience resides in the unconscious of the Boholano individual in particular. In general, the concept of the Boholano of the *ungu* varies in terms of his experiences, which he views as supernatural, if not extraordinary. The various experiences of the Boholanos pave the way for constructing different variations of the *ungu*.

As apparent in the six oral tales of *ungu*, three sub-archetypes are identified: 1. *daku nga lanngam* (a large bird), 2. *babuy* (pig), and 3. *wakwak* (a female *ungu*). Each of these is a variation of the *ungu* that is molded out of the collective thinking of the Boholanos of what is evil for them. Moreover, these variations are shaped by the inner disposition of the Boholano to perceive evil in specific manners and the nature of evil. Such a collective perception is transmitted to generations that follow. As da Costa Dutra et al. (2023) put it, collective behavior patterns are protective schemas that have been encoded culturally.

These sub-archetypes signify the collective behavior of the Boholanos in response to their exposure to occurrences involving the *ungu*. Their collective behavior towards the *ungu* is narrowed down into specific traits that serve as a form of defense mechanism when confronted with something distressful, dangerous, harmful, or morally reprehensible. As explained by Ranque-Solera (2025), these narratives about the *ungu* serve as behavioral scripts that prepare the members of the community with established responses to threatening occurrences.

In the tale *Ang Dugu gikan sa Ungu* (The Blood from the Ungu), the archetype, *daku nga langgam* (a large bird), signifies three characteristics of the superstitious Boholano. First, the Boholano generally experiences inconvenience towards the sight or presence of fresh blood. In other words, he has anxiety and low tolerance to being near or in contact with fresh blood. The couple exemplifies this in the tale because the sight of blood may imply physical injury or, much worse, the murder of a particular being. On a psychological level, this suggests that the blood-dropping bird and the image of blood in this tale speak directly to primal fears (Tangherlini, 2019). Douglas (1966) supports this with the notion that blood in folklore signifies violation of boundaries that signal physical and symbolic danger.

Second, the Boholano has an inclination to hearsay. This does not indicate that Boholanos are rumor-mongers or gossip sharers. Still, it indicates his ability to create logical connections of minute details to explain and understand certain occurrences. Hence, in the context of the Boholano collective psyche, such a response to a threatening situation serves as a collective psychological defense mechanism (Ranque-Solera, 2025). In fact, in the case of the husband

in the tale, he immediately recalled and acknowledged the role of hearsay involving the Cinubcuban bridge to arrive at a sound presumption that the large bird he saw dropped blood on their hats, and the *ungu* that waits for its victim by the said bridge is just one. Such instinctive recognition of the bird as not a natural creature but an *ungu* showcases how cultural belief systems can prepare community members to recognize and counter alleged threats.

Lastly, the Boholano is a fierce protector of pregnant women. This trait is implicitly shown in the tale as the husband warns his wife of the possible harm rain may induce on her and the baby. Not only that, the discovery of the drops of blood on the hats of the couple alarms the husband to look after the security of his wife and their baby. Such characteristics have implications for Boholano's gender stereotyping. In this case, the instinctive concern of the husband for his wife reveals the protective mechanism of folklore.

On the other hand, *Ang Mistiryusung Babuy* (The Mysterious Pig) depicts the *babuy* (pig) as an archetypal representation of evil in filthy form, which has a psychological implication and ethnographic significance.

From a psychological standpoint, the Boholano is repulsed by bizarre behavior and the intrusion of filthy animals, as demonstrated by the family members regarding the unexpected trespass of a bizarre pig. The presence of the pig induced in the minds of the family members any possible mess or physical injury that it may create to their home and them. The intrusion of the pig into domestic space, as experienced by the family, posing a threat to a pregnant member, is an example of contamination anxiety. This view of the members of the intrusion of the pig that was alleged to be an *ungu* implies the territorial disposition of the Boholano, especially of the Boholano family. This display of protective vigilance of the Boholano toward pregnant women aligns with Ranque-Solera's (2025) view that it is an example of ancestral cognitive adaptation, projecting the Boholano safeguarding susceptible or fragile members of the community.

The Boholano possesses a ritualistic mechanism when counteracting threatening or dangerous forces. This feature of the superstitious persona of the Boholano, as displayed by the grandfather, has ethnographic significance. The act of stroking the tail of a sting ray by the grandfather to get rid of an evil presence, the pig, in the house. Clasen (2012) states that such an act is an ingrained and embodied cultural tradition. This clearly shows that the Boholano is a follower of traditional practices, especially when performing rituals to eliminate inconvenient elements or disturbances that cause disorder in the family.

In the case of the *wakwak* in the tales, *Ang Tambalan ug ang Wakwak* (The Folk Doctor and the *Wakwak*), *Ingkwintru sa Wakwak* (Encounter with a *Wakwak*), and *Bugnu* (Catfight), this female version of the *ungu* signifies the Boholano as an individual who is vigilant towards threatening forces or upcoming danger, protective of life, and a persistent challenger. These traits are mirrored in the watchful reflexes of the folk doctor, the palm toddy gatherer, and the female toddy vendor who immediately confronted their attackers, who were *wakwak* in form, at night in remote areas. Clasen (2012) magnifies the immediate identification of these characters in their confrontations with the *wakwak* in their respective circumstances as adaptive time-space threat detection.

Such courage and bravery imply important sociological, political, and gender-based points. In the sociological area, the Boholano has a keen sense of identifying who is an enemy or a true friend to him. As much as possible, he maintains cordial, if not intimate, friendships with people associated with him. However, when his agility, wit, and reputation are challenged in any manner, he faces or confronts any rival head-on in a political sense of context. For him, this is an avenue to display his worth as a fighter for his rights. Moreover, if the Boholano

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encounters conflicts with somebody, he presents himself as just when resolving clashes with somebody of the same or opposite sex.

The *wakwak* in *Si Uray Itas* (Uray Itas) represents the new evil nature of Uray Itas, being the pivotal character of the tale. Her evil persona triggers in the Boholano his being dreadful of deviants and deviant behavior, protective of individual life and reputation, and reliant on folk medicine and folk doctors for any unexplainable recurring illnesses that cannot be remedied by prescribed medicine.

Such is the case of how the family of Uray Itas perceives her surprising shift to a new personality and odd actions to the extent that they bought the idea that their mother was gradually transforming into a supernatural creature—a *wakwak*—just based on the diagnosis of a folk doctor, who does not have any medical basis. This trait has psychological and social implications. The former indicates that the Boholano tends to interpret the strange behavior of an individual, regardless of any social connections, as being influenced or dictated by something or somebody supernaturally evil. Such an illogical presumption may be brought about by the lack of knowledge about such occurrences or the lack of an inaccessible expert who can elaborate on such occurrences in medical or psychological terms.

What was perceived by the family members of Uray Itas transforming into a *wakwak* may be a case of psychological neurosis or nervous breakdown. On the contrary, the latter insinuates that Boholanos set standards in the form of norms in social behavior to attain social control in their community. For the Boholanos, whoever violates and displays distressful actions will be isolated or, worse, persecuted. Such is the situation between Uray Itas's family members and herself. Presuming that she can be a threat to their safety, reputation, and life, the family members, especially her older son, Arnold, saw the necessity to isolate her from them. Her presence, even if she was already dying, was distressful on their part. For them, as long as she still lives, there is still a high probability that she can "contaminate" them with whatever she has at that point of becoming a *wakwak*. To put an end to their anxiety towards the issue, the family decided to put an end to the life of their beloved mother through a counteract performed by the folk doctor they consulted from the very beginning.

Based on this examination of the archetypes, they align with Jung's construct of the collective unconscious. It is important to note, too, that these archetypes are not merely static but are dynamically molded and, in turn, mold the specific culturally-rooted anxieties and collective norms of the Boholano people. One perfect example to illustrate this is the persistent theme of protecting pregnant women from the *ungu*. This is a manifestation of a collective cultural imperative to sustain the continuity of the community by protecting pregnant women from harmful elements.

Moreover, the comparative perspective presented in this analysis shows how the *ungu* shares noticeable characteristics with other shapeshifting midnight creatures in Southeast Asian folklore, such as the *leyak* from Indonesia and *penanggalan* from Malaysia. However, it should be noted that the *ungu* stands out in terms of the different forms it takes (bird, pig, *wakwak*) and the collective societal anxiety it exemplifies are unique to the context of the Boholano people. This underscores the significance of studying archetypes in the context of their cultural milieu to gain an in-depth understanding of their value and relevance (Eslit, 2023).

The archetypes identified in the six oral tales of *ungu* hold great significance and relevance to Boholanos, particularly in their psyche, being superstitious individuals. These archetypes

reveal certain truths about the superstitious disposition of the Boholano as well as how he relates to his fellow Boholanos and non-Boholanos.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated how these oral narratives centering on the *ungu*, from Bohol, Philippines, project unique ethnic archetypes of evil. These archetypes, therefore, exhibit and reinforce the collective Boholano behavior. There is no doubt that the various forms of the *ungu*, as an archetype of evil, reflected in the six oral tales, reveal signified antecedents that shape the collective behavior of the Boholano when they encounter evil. However, this signification of the antecedents based on the *ungu* goes deeper than mere literary interpretation.

This varying collective defensive responses of the Boholano towards anything considered malevolent implies that anything that displays morally reprehensible actions that cause fear, distress, injury, or disorder to the peace and safety of the Boholano family needs to be immediately avoided, rejected, or stopped at all costs. This shows that the family is at the center of Boholano society and needs to be protected from any element, whether in human or supernatural form, that threatens its destruction. The Boholano family should be assured of physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, and psychological safeguarding to lead to the Boholano society's flourishing in future generations.

This ethnographic analysis demonstrates how oral narratives influence the social and psychological milieu of a community, making a unique contribution to the field of folklore. By transcending from a purely literary approach in analyzing the oral tales of the *ungu*, this study shows the observable effects of folklore not only in the lives but also in the worldview of the Boholano people.

In conclusion, these oral tales of the *ungu* are repositories of the Boholanos' cultural identity. They are more than stories used to frighten or terrify listeners in communal storytelling activities. Within them are encoded the innermost fears, core values, and proven, trusted interventions for the survival of the community members. By preserving, sharing, and studying such oral narratives, we gain clarity in understanding the lasting power of telling folk tales in shaping the human experience.

6. Limitations and Future Research

Since the research was conducted in selected municipalities in the southwestern part of Bohol, the findings of this study may lack universal acceptance, especially among Boholanos from other towns in the province or from other regions of the Philippines. This remains as the main limitation of the study, being acknowledged by the researcher. Thus, the researcher considers exploring other archetypes of evil that are found in oral narratives from other Filipino ethnic groups, which would provide diverse perspectives on collective national behavior.

Another direction that future research may tread upon would be on comparative studies that contrast the *ungu* with other similar terrifying entities known to other ethnic groups, such as the *aswang* of the Tagalogs, *penggalan* of the Malaysians, or the *leyak* of the Indonesians. This can shed light on region-specific features of other archetypal representations.

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