

# **PAHIMAKAS: Uncovering the unspoken stories of Mythological Creatures.**

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## **Abstract**

Folklore, like tales of the supernatural, serves as a medium for cultural aspects, including belief systems, ideologies, and shared memories. This paper investigates how mythological stories in the Philippines have been formed and its role to the Filipinos. Modernization mainly shows its effects on the various nations, it arises and influences other countries where several cultures are changing. Ancient traditions and customs are vanishing due to technical advancements caused by modern methods and practices, which is also defined as the erosion of indigenous cultures. Given that culture is a way of life for humans and serves as an adaptive mechanism, it is relevant to investigate how culture's components react to sudden and ongoing change. The research output will be a series of digital painting portraits revealing the hidden stories of the chosen mythological creatures. The study aims to demonstrate several aspects of how these mythological creatures and folklore beliefs influence Filipino identity and the differentiation of their perspectives on how to view the roots of where a particular thing originated.

**Keywords:** *modernization, folklore, mythological creatures, erosion, indigenous cultures, ancient traditions, Filipino identity, digital painting, surrealism*

## **Introduction**

The significance of myths and tales in comprehending Filipino culture and society cannot be underestimated. Folklore, like tales of the supernatural, serves as a medium for cultural aspects, including belief systems, ideologies, and shared memories. These stories are part of our heritage and are fundamental to our social tradition, but few teachers or pupils are interested in learning about Filipino mythology, since so few individuals have shown interest in the subject so far, it is the area of our literature that has received the least study attention. Many universities do not offer it as a subject in their curriculum; instead, Greek and Roman myths are particularly popular. While liberal education must be internationally focused, it must not be removed from the local education system because it could lose purpose and perspective. Students will become disconnected if the balance is not maintained. They will be responsible for accepting and making necessary adjustments to the realities of the community to which they will belong (Jocano, 2018). Mythological creatures and folklore are important aspects of our childhood and even our cultural identity, so why aren't they discussed more in most schools? Why do we have lectures on Zeus and Hades but none on Bathala, Apolaki, and Amihan in our curriculum? Many of us are unaware that myths serve one of society's most essential functions. They enable people to articulate their feelings, including fundamental life values, methodically and to explain those beliefs in clear and

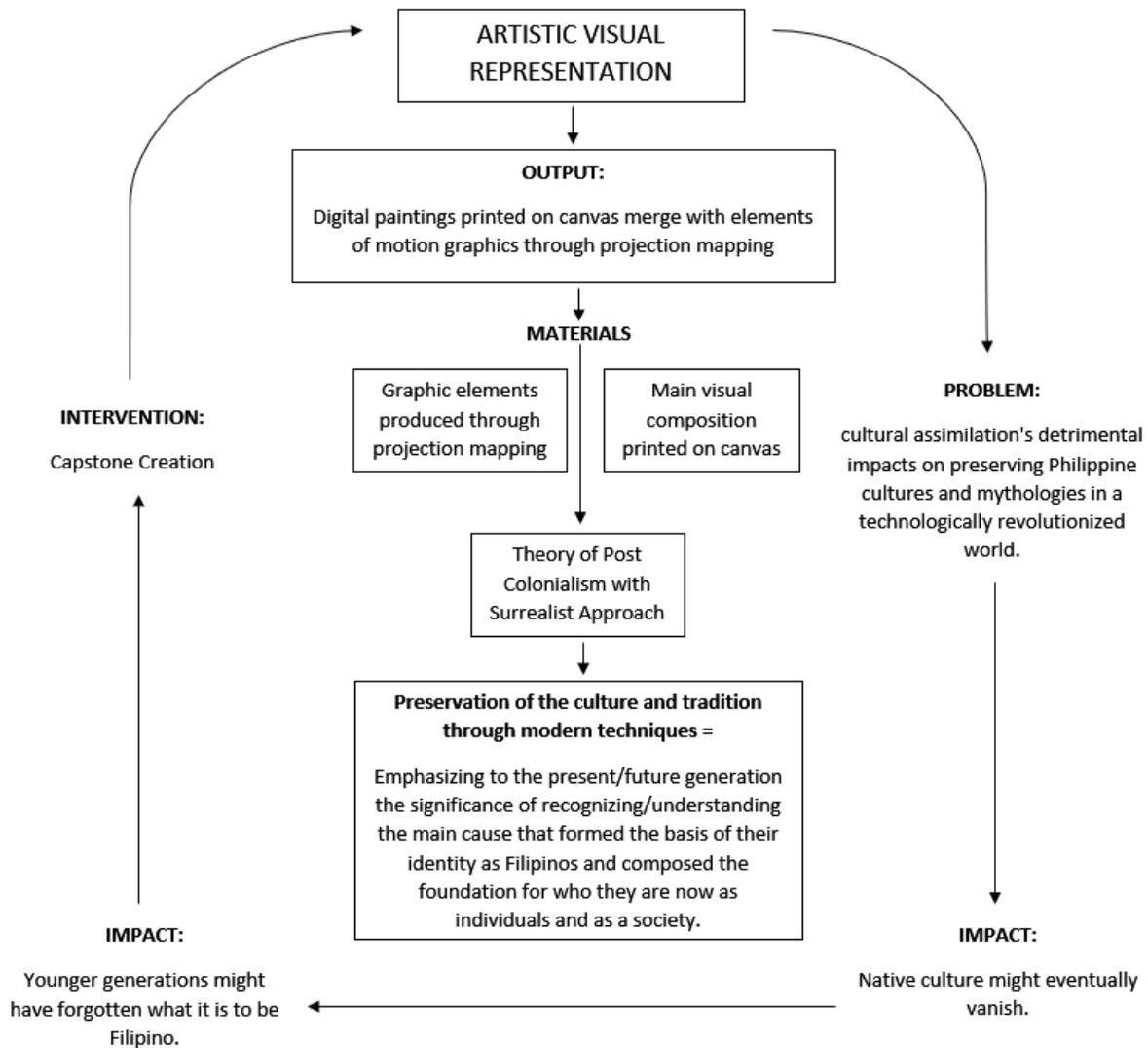
concise terms. Let us look at how Filipino myths provide a retrospective pattern of moral principles that allows us to comprehend the continuity of certain behaviors and traditions in family, social, political, and religious organizations.

Mythological stories inevitably lead to a more complete reconstruction of the social environment of our prehistoric lifeways, as well as a greater understanding of the specifics of the historical tradition that underpins our modern culture and civilization. It implies that what a person must experience or endure is right and true, true to the sentiments held by the people. If a modernist Pinoy ignores those stories about tales, myths, and rituals that are a part of our culture, it might be hard for us to recognize our origin and identity because these expressions of local folklore give us a sense of being Filipino.

With the surrealism approach, it is intended to use the unconscious to access the creative potential of the mind and imagination of the viewers. It tackles the brain vision highlighting the hidden stories and connection of different Filipinos to mythological creatures.

**Figure 1**

**Framework of Visual Representation for Addressing Cultural Assimilation's Detrimental Impacts on the Filipino Society**



The conceptual framework I employed demonstrates clearly how I concluded to convey a visual representation of how to address the detrimental impact of cultural assimilation on Filipino society. In this segment, I created a simplified, illustrated summary of the steps involved in creating my multimedia project. Based on the context of this study, the creative framework and the words that complement the main objectives are discussed.

The diagram shows how this multimedia project will execute as a whole and what results can be envisioned given the provided solution. To preserve our culture and

traditions while also embracing modernity for the sake of the next generation, my main goal is to inspire people to act. This multimedia output would promote unique methods for comprehending symbols and concepts that would enhance viewer creativity as well as the collaboration of other multimedia students in choosing innovative mediums. The planned multimedia output will empower Filipinos and multimedia artists to translate the information of certain symbols and interpret the hidden context conveyed using surrealism.

For my **research design**, this research will employ qualitative and quantitative research methods in the form of an ethnographic process, to gather information on various mythological ideologies, stories, and theories through the analysis of different journals articles and documentaries, as well as through one-on-one interviews with random people, even if they have or do not have prior knowledge, beliefs, or experience with mythology. Each respondent will be asked 13 questions through Google form survey questionnaire, and they will be limited to only 20 people. These individuals are primarily aged 15 and above. The method was used to understand the purpose of different beliefs about Philippine mythological creatures and Folklore. Knowing the technicalities of its phenomena from the perspective of its ideology will further highlight the hidden objectives of why these creatures exist, whether mentally or physically. The data gathering helps to recognize the needed materials and subjects for the overall artwork in discovering the context of the story planned to translate through visuals using a series of digital painting portraits.

Analyzing different articles, research, and related journals as well as related artworks of artists will be used to empower and support the information that represents the visuals of the artwork. The transcript record of the ideas gathered from various documents, journals and articles as well as from the respondent's response will be seen on the RRL, RRW and in the results and discussion portion of the paper.

I will be focusing on Filipinos in general aged 15 and above as the **target audience** for this research due to the main purpose of preservation of Filipino native values, culture, and beliefs. The geographic location for the research will be in different parts of Metro Manila. It is intended to collect data to reveal the foundation connecting indigenous people's ideas at that time and transferring them into the contemporary world. The research will focus more on the analysis and creative process of Filipinos in determining how to view a particular subject or materials within the artwork as they observe the series of digital paintings.

For my **design process**, my job as a multimedia artist is to explore different multidisciplinary approaches and unique styles of the medium that will translate narratives into a visual. I intended to create a series of digital paintings printed on canvas and merge them with the aesthetic movement effects of graphic elements produced through projection mapping, fusing the modern style with the cultural and native content that addresses the paper's main concern to unite the classic narrative with technologically advanced techniques to unleash their unexpected supreme potential. The approach aims to transform the audience's visual experience, which gives

them a profound impact on the reality of life, emphasizing the effects of the concealed definition of unrevealed ideas based on people's experiences.

The main plan of the project's content is to illustrate fusion of the faces of typical Filipinos merging with the anthropomorphic figures' variety of mythological creatures. It connects the visual representation characteristics of Pinoy human beings into the world of Filipino mythological creatures conveying the stories behind these subjects. I depict these through the form of humans and creatures morphing together which creates a surrealist style that unveils the hidden identity of internal and external experiences of Filipino through folklore beliefs. Displaying the fundamentals of Philippine history through modern and digital processes in a contemporary world, emphasizing to the future generation the significance of recognizing/understanding the main cause that formed the basis of our identity as Filipinos and composed the foundation for who we are now as individuals and as a society.

The project will consist of three series of digitally painted portraits using Adobe Photoshop, each with projection-based motion effects that bring the paintings to life. The purpose is to define the identity and characteristics of being a Filipino while maintaining a well-stabilized visual feel and ambiance. The objects and materials that will be used to produce the said technique will be built based on the findings of the research. The digital painting itself will be printed on canvas at a size of 16x20 and will be hung on a wall while flashing the motion graphics into it during the time of the exhibition. The reference materials, elements, subject, layout, and overall composition of the digital painting illustration and the visual elements of the projection will be determined by the result of the gathered research data analysis. The planned platform would be on display in a dark area. The artwork description will be presented on the right side of each piece.

The art exhibition will be deliberating brochure containing the overall description of the entire show. Approaching audiences with an online gallery site will increase the project's popularity. Creating a website to showcase the main intention of the project and the different artwork pieces through the web. The objective is to display the details of the art exhibition with the content, particularly the location, opening date and time, the poster, video teaser, artist (statement, project goal, and identity), and the overall description of the theme.

### **Pre-production Stage**

To ensure that the necessary deadlines are fulfilled, and the output will be completed on schedule, I concentrated mostly on planning the digital paintings' production process and preparing the needed materials/objects that I gathered through researching procedures presented by various related literature and artworks, as well as on the result of the interview. I did this by producing a Gantt chart. I began here to budget the costs associated with the pre-production, production, and post-production phases. It is necessary to study visual elements, and if appropriate to the theme of the research, the gathered materials and subjects will be added to the main output to

convey the intended information. I also look for reference materials, such as works from different artists and digital painters.

### **Production Stage**

For my production stage, it is my goal to execute everything that is planned for the main outputs. In this stage, I started to draw my plan for visual elements that are the result of the research and paint them digitally, as well as to arrange and edit the overall essential aesthetics of the motion graphics and search for possible printing shops that offer canvas printing. With the use of my laptop and pen-tablet, the production process is done at home with my equipment and devices.

### **Post-production Stage**

After I finished rendering the three paintings, I brought the softcopy file of my digital painting to the chosen printing shop to print it on canvas and achieve the desired aesthetic look. This is the moment when I plan and organize the place's necessary elements as well as the resources required for the projection mapping, including the graphic elements, effects, composition movement, and color scheme. This is the part where I am also concerned about where the output would be, keeping in mind that the environment must be dark to create the proper ambiance for the technique. The primary focus is on editing and improving the artwork's general appearance. Here I also make sure that the canvas will last by considering its durability and ensuring that the exhibition layout plan will be followed to show off the overall objective visual presentation.

### **Review of Related Literature**

This chapter presents the related literature regarding the topic of how Philippine mythological creatures affect Filipino culture and identity, it includes the ideas, generalization, methodologies, and conclusion. Related literature that was mentioned in this chapter assists in familiarizing readers with details that are relevant to or like the study and will also introduce the syncretization of ideas relating to the research topic.

### **Mythology and the Stories Behind the Cultural Identity**

This study particularly discusses the importance of being aware intellectually of the local mythology and by using the post-colonialism approach it conveys how Spanish Colonizers change the views of the Filipinos about what is true in understanding the personalities of mythological creatures.

True Philippine paranormal stories are set in the Philippines and tell new versions of urban legends that your grandparents told you. This makes the series especially accessible to Filipinos. Historians define mythology as "a story portrayed as historical, dealing with customs peculiar to a civilization or a group of people." Because of these myths, we can better understand our ancestors' mentality and learn about how they lived, which will help us learn more about who we are as Filipinos (Commoner, 2020). When the Spaniards arrived, they reinforced Catholicism, which destroyed Filipino's belief in various gods. On the other hand, they maintained their faith in malevolent spirits and deities. Instead of forcing the ancient Filipinos to expel these beliefs, the Spaniards manipulate their perspective on them. The Spaniards encouraged

Filipino ancestors to perceive these ghouls as devils, instead of considering them as part of the natural environment. The *engkantos*, who were meant to bring either miracles or curses, were morphed into demons capable of dragging a person to hell. Even the respected babaylans were accused of being *mangkukulams* or witches, comprehensively destroying their healing ability.

Evidence has been discussed how the Spanish colonizers influenced the mythological beliefs of the Filipinos, concluding that Catholicism has changed how mythological creatures are portrayed in such negative or unreal ways among Filipinos.

## **Mythological Creatures in the Lives of the Filipinos**

This study examines how mythological creatures form the sacred beliefs of the Filipinos with no hard evidence of whether they are real or unreal.

People would dress up in spooky, supernatural-themed costumes once a year, go trick-or-treating, and attend parties. This might not always be the case for us Filipinos, though. With family and friends, we meet to celebrate Halloween and listen to stories or watch scary movies based on Filipino folklore. We talk about everything from ghosts to *engkantos* or what your friend's friend has experienced, once we talk about the supernatural. These eerie tales have been shared through the generations. They are often told in the middle of the night to scare kids into being good. Nonetheless, these tales would still give adults goosebumps. Still, for those who are not particularly fond of the supernatural, or who try to ignore it, there are some supernatural beings who will make you wonder whether there are other creatures who exist among us (Cortez, 2017). Myths and legends from the Philippines continue to play an important part in the everyday lives of those living in rural areas. Using the Phenomenology approach helps to further analyze an individual Filipino experience different mysterious situations without having a deep explanation. Relating to the given theory, Mythological creatures are described as something that a person may quickly encounter with only their human senses but are considered ignored or unreal due to a lack of justification, facts, and evidence.

In conclusion, whether these said mythological creatures are real or unreal, if individual experiences or believes, even without concise evidence or facts, these beings are real by their principle, and by that, I can say that they exist and are alive by the people's ideology throughout the society we belong to.

## **Mythology and Philippine Studies**

This study presents several cultural practices that Filipinos may actively practice without realizing it. It also defines its importance to the Filipinos and the Philippine society.

Anyone who reads old records about the Philippines before the Spaniards arrived would notice that our ancestors believed in a variety of gods. These gods lived in our ancestors' environments and interacted with them regularly through social and ritual

activities. Aside from these relationships, these supernatural creatures were thought to have control over all aspects essential to man's life, such as weather, diseases, crop success, and so on, to the point that every aspect of everyday activities had to conform to their wishes. If a farmer, hunter, or wayfarer ventures into the fields, hills, or forests without first seeking permission from the spirits who live nearby, he will be met with tragedy. Similarly, a traveler going on a new journey should first seek permission from the gods of the environment to ensure that he arrives safely at his destination. Appropriate sacrifices should be presented to the "soul spirits" of the departed relatives who were considered intercessors with the higher divinities for a prosperous crop, fishing, building a house, or any other concern. During the performance of these traditional ceremonies, offerings should be made (Jocano, 2018). These various methods of connecting with the spirit world demonstrate how our forefathers have fostered the development of traditional beliefs and behaviors. Examining their experiences shows that the myths are a part of any social group if people do things together and it conveys how Filipino myths provide a retrospective pattern of moral principles that allow for the understanding of the continuity of behaviors and traditions (i.e., family and kindred groups, social, political, and religious institutions). Conclusively, these rituals set our identity as Filipinos; they are intended constructively to be recognized as our specification as Pinoys.

### **Religion Influence in the Philippines**

The pre-Columbian belief system of the Filipinos included a pantheon of gods, spirits, creatures, and men who were thought to watch over the streams, farms, trees, mountains, and woods as well as the homes. Bathala was greater than all these other gods and spirits since he was the one who created the earth and man. It was traditional to appease these gods and spirits, some of which were beneficent and others of which were malicious, by making regular offerings and praying to them. Images carved out of wood and metal were understood to symbolize ancestor spirits, and there was no differentiation established between the spirits and their material representation. The things people did in this life determined whether they got a reward or a punishment after they died (Miller, n.d.). The statement tries to study the structure of Philippine origin myths by following Claude Levi-Strauss's method of analysis. From a structural point of view, most Philippine origin and creation stories are about resolving the conflict between this world and the divine realms of the Sky World and the underworld. Myths from all the major parts of the archipelago will be looked at to show how liminal and mediating categories try to solve these problems by making certain ideas, beings, and rituals strange and dangerous or more sacred. The fact that major world religions have had an impact on the area over time has changed these mediating categories and the way these myths are put together. It concludes to figure out how Christianity changed the basic structures of these myths.

### **Kapre's home' near Malacañang “Old Balete Tree”**

The most well-known Kapre in the Philippines is Mr. Brown, who is reported to reside in the 100-year-old balete tree at the main entrance of Malacañang Palace, the



country's executive and legislative institutions (Legaspi, 2011). The personnel sometimes refer to Mr. Brown as Mr. Jones and view him as a kind but harmless prankster. The story most likely began when the balete tree was once surrounded by thousands of flickering fireflies that have been caught from some far-off villages and released as a great ephemeral gesture of a present for a then First Lady. Former President Noynoy Aquino granted the tree historic status in 2011. The Kapre was feared even by the military, according to Elmer Navarro, whose father worked as a domestic assistant under Marcos. He also recalled that sometimes smoke could be seen coming from the tree. The Kapre was known as Mr. Brown, probably confused with Father Brown, an American priest who was believed to have been killed by the Japanese when they occupied the palace and used it as their headquarters during World War II, according to Eduardo Rozon, chief steward under the Marcos administration.

There is a rumor about a taxi driver who encountered Mr. Brown. He was standing outside the palace's entrance one night when he asked for a light and turned to see the Kapre smoking a cigar. After that, he hurried to the servants' quarters, where he informed them about the legendary Kapre.

These stories of mythological creatures, particularly Kapre, prove that they existed not physically fine, but presented to the narratives of some famous government leaders and employees ideally wise. These were also part of our history, as President Aquino presided over the ceremonial unveiling of the commemorative marking of the new heritage tree at the Malacañang opening of the United Nations Decade of Biodiversity. You hear so many stories about "Mr. Brown," President Aquino said, "but I have yet to encounter it." It is not an ordinary tree.

## **Revolutionary Kapre**

The controversial first president of the nation, Emilio Aguinaldo, was also reported to have had a Kapre as a comrade who guarded him. The Kapre is known to have stayed under a bridge close to Aguinaldo's residence in Kawit, Cavite. The Aguinaldo residence had a personal protector in the form of the Kapre. It once served as a barrier, reflecting Spanish soldiers' bullets at them as they attempted to cross the bridge. Aguinaldo is said to have received military counsel from this creature, along with a little white stone amulet that made him unkillable on the battlefield and may have contributed to his long life of 94 years (Spike 2022). Witnesses reportedly observed Aguinaldo spit out a little white stone immediately before he passed away on his deathbed, adding to the hearsay.

A lot of people think that this Kapre is David Fagen, an African American soldier who sided with the Filipino Revolutionary Army during the Philippine-American War. The 24th U.S. Regiment was where Fagen served. There are only four African American soldiers in the Army now. Due to racism in American institutions and the treatment of white and black soldiers differently, he changed sides. His defection may have been influenced by the common white American soldiers' negative opinions of the Filipino occupational resistance, which they regularly described as "niggers" and

"gugus." The US military and public became so determined to capture him that they offered a reward to anyone who could bring them his head. By the end of 1901, a bounty hunter turned in a reported severed skull of David Fagen that was only partially decomposed. Along with the fact that there was little persuasive evidence to prove his death, the Filipino people did not believe this story because they continued to encounter him after he was officially declared dead.

Many people respected and loved Captain Fagen for his bravery and victory in the fight to defend the Filipino people, primarily the indigenous Aeta group, which gave him the nickname "Pugot," a mythological and friendly supernatural character.

### **Review of Related Works**

This portion of the paper will mention several works related to mythological creatures, and how they influenced the Filipinos in terms of the work's main message. This segment contains stories of various folklore and mythological creature norms. The works that have been retrieved are used to analyze the relationship of mythological creatures to a different class of Filipinos.

### **Figure 2**

*Jay Olivia, Trese, 2021*



Alexandra Trese is a young detective in Metro Manila who investigates paranormal crimes and crimes in the underworld. Most of the episodes of the show have standalone integrations, but a flashback layer ties together the story of Trese's past. The entire show is based on Filipino folktales and features demons and gods in

every story. The series highlights several realistic crimes that affect the Philippines or the world through a supernatural spectrum. On a practical level, it concentrates on the drug battles, unscrupulous cops, and dishonest politicians that plague our society. Not only do they profit from government apparatuses, but they also engage in human trafficking and promote gang violence. Mayar Santamaria, a character from the first episode, plays the role of the ultimate protagonist. To win elections, he murders his mistress and works with vampires (Agrawal, 2021). In comics and graphic novels, many Filipino artists have tried to rewrite myths in their way. Trese, for example, is based on a comic by Budjette Tan and Kajo Baldismo that follows the exploits of detective Alexandra Trese as she deals with the supernatural.

It defines that the protagonist meets Filipino creatures like the *tikbalang*, *duwende*, and *tiyanak* who live among people in modern-day Manila. Folktales and legends can also be relived through pop culture in the form of comics, which are short pieces of serialized stories, and graphic novels, which are longer and tell full stories. One of the programs also tackles Catholicism's superstitions. *Tiyanak*, a vampire-like creature, comes to life and haunts its mother, an actress who aborted the child to keep her Hollywood reputation clean. The dominant religion of the region, Roman Catholicism, considers abortion to be a mortal sin. A symbolic connection to the cultural myth is a supernatural vampire resurrecting and threatening its mother.

### Figure 3

*Francisco Coching, Pedro Penduko, 2006*



Pedro is still a simple boy thrown into a world of superstitions and mythical creatures. Nevertheless, the class's most clumsy student goes on an extraordinary journey with his helpers. As he overcomes each obstacle on his way to save his father, he feels better about himself. To accomplish this, he needs to possess the power of the

"*mutya ng saging*," and he has recently traveled to *Floreshka* to rescue his father. However, as Pedro Penduko begins his journey, he is immediately confronted by some of the most terrifying creatures from Philippine mythology. This marks the beginning of his encounters with the monsters (IMDb, 2006). The study highlighted concepts including characters, symbols, and themes. In summary, the series' characters represent Filipino identity. With the examination of symbols, they made use of an amulet that is typical in Filipino culture. The discussion of the story revolves around significant topics such as one's identity and culture. It was discovered that the idea contributed to the Filipino artistic sensibility. The public wants to see visual arts that are not only commercially successful but also important to society and work to promote nationalism. It concludes that Filipinos want something with a lot of substance, resulting that one way to interact with the viewers is to play with the composition with the help of surrealism.

#### Figure 4

*Karen Francisco, Naermyth, 2010*



The world came to an end. It wasn't because of a comet, prophecy, natural disaster, or other online nonsense, but because every myth ever written turned out to be a real account. These monsters, which we learned about as youngsters, conducted a conflict that resulted in the extinction of the human species. Those who are unlucky enough to survive are pursued or, worse, tortured. People could only look to the Shepherd for help in these dark days. I am one of these shepherds, and I thought my sole purpose was to protect the few humans who managed to survive in this barren landscape. But, after rescuing Dorian from *Dwende's* clutches, I realized that he is not only the most dangerous person on the planet, but he may also be our only hope for

salvation. Now I must protect a natural killer, but to do that, I must give up everything human (Francisco, 2010). The word Naermyth is a combination of the ideas Never and Myth. The story takes place in the post-apocalyptic Philippines, where creatures from folklore and myth have overrun human society. Based on the Marxist Theory approach, the author attempted to create her retellings of local legends to appeal to younger and modern audiences. She was most likely hoping to draw attention to our collection of traditional tales and ignite people's interest in the topic. She could also be making a statement by portraying these mythological monsters as metaphors for real-life issues that are destroying our society today, such as how we don't have to look for monsters in dark, remote places because they could be right here in our vicinity, running government positions and stealing money from people's taxes. Concluding that these politicians was the bourgeois, and the Filipino worker were the Proletarians.

## Figure 5

*Erik Matti, Tiktik: The Aswang Chronicles, 2012*



Makoy, an abrasive and arrogant engineer from Manila, arrives in the province to convince his pregnant lover, Sonia, to reconcile and return to Manila with him. Sonia, on the other hand, has had enough of her boyfriend's immaturity and chooses to stay with her parents, Nestor and Fely, as well as her childhood friend Bart, who works as her father's right-hand man. After learning that Sonia will be celebrating her birthday the next day, Makoy makes a last-ditch effort to repair their relationship by obtaining a pig from Bart's distant cousins to be cooked during the party. When they buy something, it turns out they get more than they bargained for. A group of greedy *aswang* creatures'

attacks Makoy's pregnant wife, forcing the soon-to-be father to defend her. When he gets into difficulty with a group of gypsies who change into *TikTik*, horrible, man-eating creatures with a taste for unborn infants and a thirst for retribution, he must battle not just for his love, but for their very survival (Chui, 2012). The cheap comic books that combined humorous sketches with more dark and horrifying tales featuring ghosts, aswang, and other creatures were the vehicles through which Filipino mythology made its way into the mainstream consciousness of pop culture. The aswang is a particularly notable species for several reasons, one of which is that it has a strong desire for children and infants who have not yet been born. Vampires and aswangs several other similarities, including the ability to transform into other creatures and an allergy to garlic and salt that can prove fatal.

## Figure 6

*Natu Xantino, Oryol, 2021*



Oryol was a lovely princess who was cursed by a greedy sorceress and transformed into a snake woman, according to the folk epic Ibalong of Bicol. She took on the role of the forest's protector and leader of the monster horde (SEAQCF, 2021). *Hadyong*, the hero, engaged in a bloody war with the beasts to conquer the forest. However, Oryol, who had transformed herself into a lovely woman, managed to seduce him. She reverted to a half-snake just as she was ready to murder him, but *Hadyong* was too quick; he quickly grabbed Oryol by the throat and started to choke her. She reverted to a beautiful woman on the point of death, and *Hadyong* could not bear to execute her. He kissed Oryol, a man in love, and she was set free when the cursed *pitogo* seed that had chained her dropped from her hands.

Several tales about half-woman, half-snake entities, including the Chinese legend of the White Snake and the Arabic tale of the Laughing Snake, share similarities with the myth of Oryol. In her piece, *She Who Sees the Unknown*, artist Morehshin Allahyari refers to the latter to examine, in the words of the Whitney Museum, "personal and imagined stories to explore subjects like femininity, sexual abuse, morality, and hysteria." The snake emerges as a complicated figure, expressing various and usually distorted perceptions of the feminine and revealing conceptions of separateness and ugliness.

## Figure 7

*Natu Xantino, Sirena, 2021*



In Philippine mythology, mermaids can take many different forms. Although they are thought to attack humans as well, they are known in Bicol as Magindara, or "guardians of the sea." While the Manobos who live at the base of the Pantaron Mountain Range refer to mermaids as *Alimugkat*, guardians of the vast rivers, the Sama Dilaut consider them signs of disaster. The scales and silver hair of the *Alimugkat* are colorful (SEAQCF, 2021). According to a legend among the Manobos, *Alimugkat* was the only female and the youngest of eight siblings. She advised her brothers about the human-eating *Busaws* who lived there when they insisted on coming on a mission to climb the most treacherous peak of the *Pantaron* as a rite of passage to adolescence. But the little sister's advice was ignored by the brothers. After some time passed and her brothers still hadn't come back, she decided to rescue them on her own. She found only the remains of her brothers when she arrived at the treacherous mountain; they

had all been eaten. She scooped up their bones and used her strength to bring her brothers back to life.

For trans women, the mermaid is a fundamental icon. Her womanhood and femininity are not determined by what is between her legs because she has the upper body of a woman and the tail of a fish from the waist down (after all, she has none). Julian is a Mermaid, a children's book by Jessica Love, is about a transgender child who aspires to look like the glamorously dressed woman she encounters in the subway. These are what Jung refers to as "icons," or perhaps "role models," who have taken the form of mythical characters. Since the time of our birth, these archetypes have been a part of their collective consciousness and have provided us with important symbolism.

## Figure 8

*Edgar Manahan, Aswang Origin and History, 2018*



It begins in the 16th century, during the year 1501 on the Julian calendar up to 1600. When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines in western Visayas, particularly in Capiz, they began to write a book about creatures derived from them combining various stories based on some parts of Capiz. One of the most popular creatures in the book was named "Asura" which comes from the Sanskrit language of Hinduism in India and means "demon" in English. The term Asura suddenly developed and changed, as time went on, into the modern term Aswang (Manahan, 2018). Aswang is mainly known for eating the internal organs of humans, mostly children, especially during the mother's period of pregnancy, they also can change their physical form into a different animal, but despite their capabilities, they can only change form until midnight, while during the day they are like a normal person. According to some anthropologists' research, the Spaniards used Aswang stories to control the population of the Filipinos, as well as with the help of the Encomienda system. They developed and invented stories about Aswang to scare rebels who were hiding in some part of the jungle, and they must



ensure that no Filipino goes to the jungle to prevent communication with the rebels, particularly on the territory of the Spaniards. It came to the point that when a rebel was killed by a Spanish soldier, they would hide the truth and manipulate the story to make it seem like it was because of the *Aswangs*.

Based on the modern investigation about why the Aswang is from Capiz, there is a particular portion of the place, which is in Panay, where there's this disease called X-Linked Dystonia Parkinsonism (XDP), Any portion of the body might develop dystonia, which can extend to other areas when a disease is present. It may show up in a variety of ways, such as dragging or twisting one-foot, frequent jaw opening and closing, unusual neck turning or posture, tongue protrusion, lip pursing, or rapid eye blinking. The Spaniards came up with an idea to turn the disease's weird movement effect into the characteristics of being an Aswang. They believed that the Aswang is weak during the day, especially when placed in sunlight, which can cause hysterical action. That is why, when the person with the XDP disorder is placed in sunlight and exhibits unusual movement as a natural result of the disease, the Spaniards describe that person as having aswang characteristics, and because of that manifestation, they killed that person in front of the public.

## Figure 9

*Jordan Clark, KAPRE: The Tree Dweller, 2015*



One intriguing aspect is the origin of *Kapre's* name. It is generally accepted that it derives from the Islamic term *Kafir*, which means "non-believer," but exactly how this happened is unknown, especially since the Islamic population of the Philippines didn't use the term. The pre-Islamic Arabic phrase "kafir" means to cover seeds with soil or earth. It referred to the denial of truth in the Qur'an. Later, Muslim historians in South Asia referred to Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs as "Kafir." Muslims in Africa began using the term "Kafir" in the 15th century to describe the non-Muslim African slaves that were

sold to European and Asian traders. Significant developments were also taking place in the Philippines. Later in 1565, the Spanish started establishing colonies and converting the native populations to Christianity (Clark, 2015).

Through Portuguese traders, the Spanish imported slaves during this period. Slaves carried from East Africa through India and Malaysia were referred to as both negros and Cafres, a term derived from the Muslim term Kafir, while those taken through Acapulco to Manila were known as negros. By the middle of the 17th century, many of these slaves were in an uprising. This is what gave rise to the belief that the Kapre was a Spanish invention to prevent indigenous people from helping Negro slaves escape. However, there is no historical proof to support this. In fact, from 1640 to 1820, the use of the term foreign slavery started to progressively drop.

The first reports of the creature smoking pipes and cigars date back to the early 20th century. In the latter half of the 16th century, the Spanish brought tobacco to the Philippines. By 1782, a government monopoly had made tobacco in Luzon and Mindanao a carefully regulated crop. Farmers were given quotas to meet but made very little money, while bribery and corruption benefitted government officials. The iconic Manila cigar was a premium item only available to the rich. However, the monopoly was ended in 1882, making tobacco accessible to anyone who could grow or purchase it. Families would share foot-long cigars in the Ilocos region. It is possible that the Kapre would partake in this enjoyable activity. The Abakada alphabet was then formally approved in 1940. Because the letter "C" was absent from the alphabet, the spelling of Capre changed to "K," which is Kapre.

#### **Origin:**

- 3000bce, Animism in the Philippines creates behaviour and early image of the Kapre.

#### **Evolution:**

- 1872ce, End of the tobacco monopoly, tobacco becomes an Ilocos regional identifier.
- 1900ce, Ilocano "Pugot" becomes the Kapre.
- 1950, current comic books complete the Kapre's visual look.

#### **History of the term:**

- 3000bce - 600ce, K-F-R (pre-Islamic term meaning to cover).
- 600ce, KUFR is used in the Qu'ran.
- 13th century, Kafir used to describe non-Muslims.
- 16th century, Kafir used to describe non-Muslims, black slaves borrowed by the Spanish as Cafre.
- 19th century, Cafre evolved into a descriptive word meaning uncivilized behavior.
- 19th century, Phonological alteration pronounces Cafre as Kapre.
- 1940ce, ABAKADA alphabet is adopted changing the spelling to Kapre.

"It is important to see where you came from, just so that you can figure out whether you want to continue that or to depart from it". - Budjette Tan, creator of TRESE comics.

"More and more every day, we are coming to terms with the deeper parts of our being colonized" We are Filipinos, we're proud to be Filipinos, but we still go and have

McDonald's type of hamburgers, even if we do go to Jollibee. - Peque Gallaga, director of Shake Rattle and Roll.

## Figure 10

*Natu Xantino, Babaylan, 2021*



The babaylan was a social institution in the pre-colonial Philippines. She was a priestess, equal in social standing to the Datu and the Bagani. Only females, whether cis or trans, are qualified to become Babaylans. It is argued that gender was identified by one's social contribution rather than genitalia in the pre-colonial Philippines and some current indigenous societies. When the Spaniards arrived, they refused to accept such a concept of gender. Instead, they insisted on their unfairly discriminatory colonialist perspective (SEAQCF, 2021). They manipulated our thinking process, disparaged our folklore, converted the Babaylans into dangerous witches, and killed them. They took steps to suppress transgender people and erased us from our proper position in history. It has been demonstrated to us that genderqueer and transgender individuals are the creation of the devil and a disgrace to nature. But we have always been a part of the history of our nation. It shows that even before we fight for our freedom, we fight not only for the independence of the whole nation but also for every individual's fair judgment, regardless of their gender and personality. The Spaniards used their huge influence and power to carry out their selfishness and use their unfair regulations to execute their agenda. Everyone must accept the idea that everyone has a gender identity and should have the right to express it naturally.

## Results and Discussion

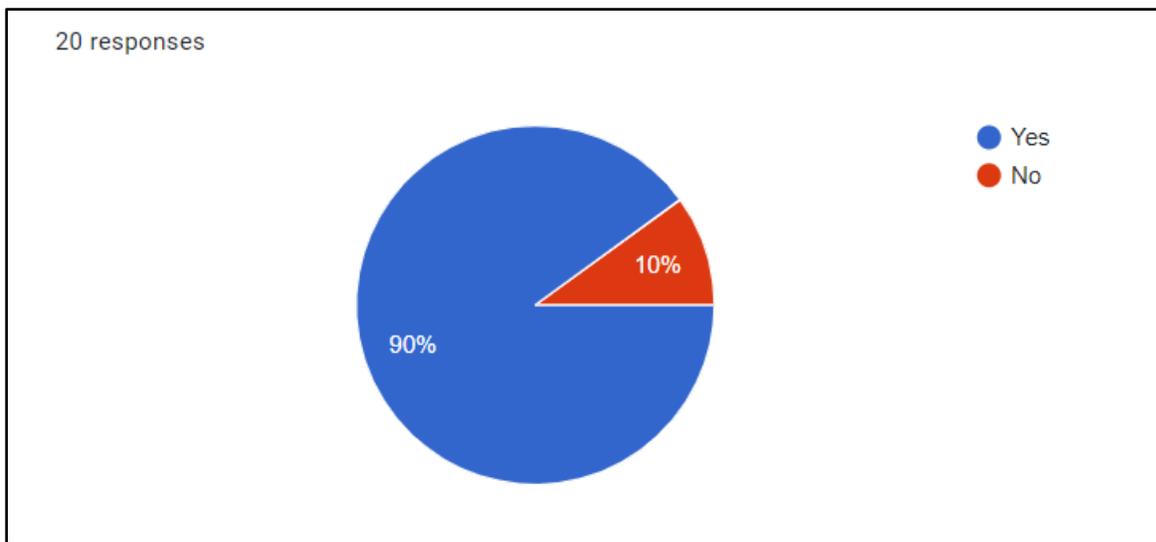
This portion of the paper will discuss the result of the preliminary survey questionnaire that I have conducted using an online platform. Using qualitative and quantitative approach allows me to further analyze how a particular individual conveys an idea about their knowledge of Philippine Folklore and Mythology. The purpose of the preliminary survey is to discover more ideas about each respondent's personal experiences from their point of view, including how it originally came to them, how well they understood it, and how it affected their lives, regardless of their various social statuses, cultural practices, lifestyles, and geographic locations. It also empowers me to explore an essential foundation for how I deliver and develop my output, which enables me to convey a strong basis through visual representation and better articulate the problem that I am addressing in my study.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Preliminary Survey Results

### 1. Do you have any familiarity with folklore?

**Figure 1.1**

*Philippine folklore (pamahiin) people's familiarity.*



The pie chart that will be seen in Figure 1.1 shows the number of Filipino individuals who do or do not have any idea about Philippine folklore. The chart shows that most of the respondents are familiar with folklore. According to the result of the survey questionnaire, 90% of the 20 people who answered have a particular knowledge or familiarity with folklore, and only 10% of the rest have no idea about it. There are 18 respondents who answered yes, and only 2 answered no to the question. The result concludes that there is a higher probability that most Filipinos are familiar with folklore stories regardless of their location, where they grew up, or how they used to live.

### 2. If yes, how did you first become aware of it? (Pertaining to question no.1)

## Figure 1.2

*Analyzing how the idea of folklore was first introduced to their lives.*

Read some stories
sa mga matatanda
My lola told me once if i see a smoked in the tree there's someone called " Kapre" half horse half human.
From the stories of other people
T.V., School, family, surroundings, and community
Since I was a child, as my parents believe on it. It was passed on to them practices since 1898.
because of what the elders say
When I was a child, through my grandparents.
From relatives

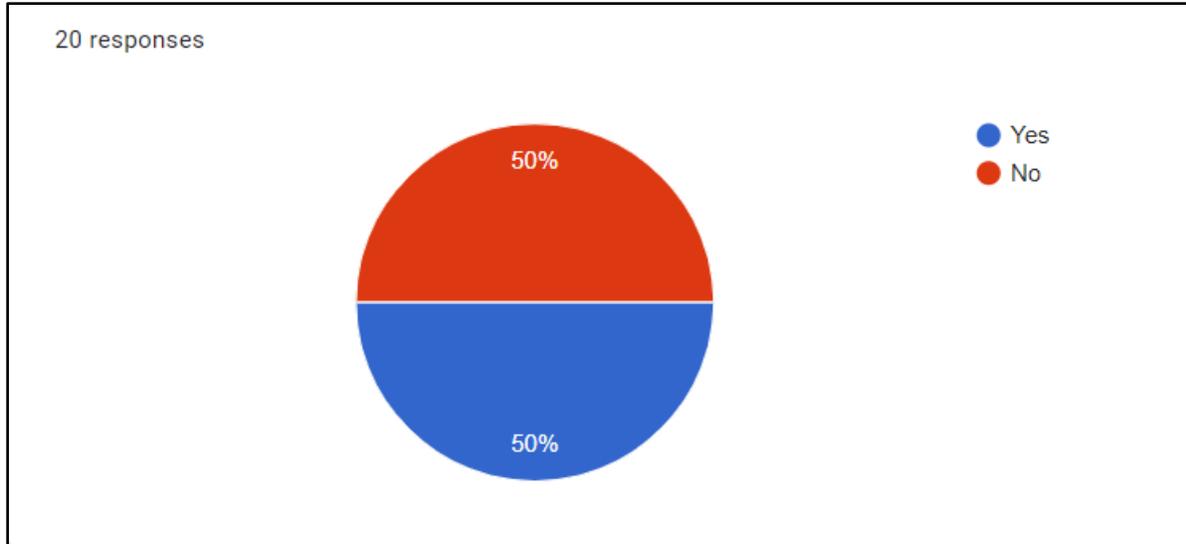
it is some concepts of many subject in school
With the help of my parents
These topic are talk of the town. In our community and country, folklores are widespread that is why I became aware of it.
Barang
It's part of our grownup stories when I was a kid plus it was part of one of our subject back when I was studying
As a kid, stories from my auntie and uncle.
Primary school
When I was elementary our teacher thought us some folklores when it comes to dancing, tale or saying.
Elementary days..

Based on the answers given by the respondents in Figures 1.2 and 1.3, it shows that most of the respondents acquired preliminary knowledge about folklore through their families, specifically from their grandmother or their parents. Other answers said that they heard various stories from schools, other people, different articles, and some rumors within the community.

### **3. Do you believe in folklore?**

**Figure 2.1**

*Determining the respondents' level of realism regarding to folklore.*

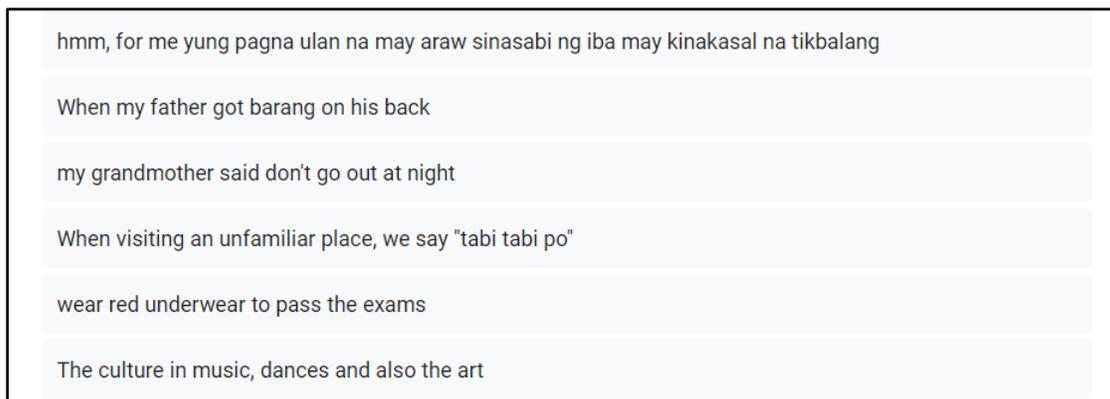


The pie chart's outcome reveals that among the 20 respondents, half either believe in or do not believe in folklore. With the result, I can say that with an equal perspective on whether folklore is legitimate or just a belief, people have different ways of telling an ideology whether it is true or not, considering their personal life experience and how they interacted with it.

**4. If you believe in folklore, what folklore beliefs do you know? Or which ones do you practice? (Pertaining to question no.3)**

**Figure 2.2**

*Determining the factors that influence believing in folklore.*



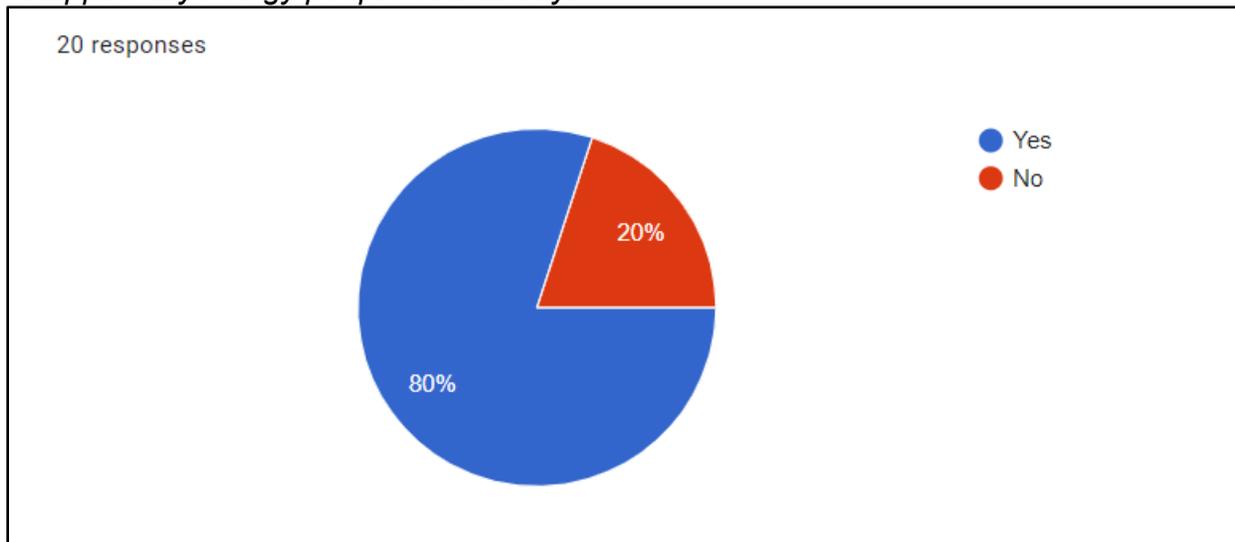
The one folklore that I know is not wearing red shirt while I'm on burial site
I do not believe to any of those.
In province ung tawas and panggamot Ng albularyo
Alamat ng Bayabas
Knocking on the wood and saying tabi tabi po.
Lagi kapag kailangan ng umalis at hindi pa natatapos kumain ang bawat miyembro ng pamilya ay kailangan paikutin ang lahat ng pinggan sa hapag kainan.

The respondents who have knowledge or an idea of folklore state what specific folklore principles they believe in or are aware of. While concluding, I consider the fact that where they grow up, they have a variety of knowledge that is influenced by the people and culture in the community where they grow up. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 show that Filipinos do, in some way, understand folklore. The responses demonstrate that, despite modern technology, Filipinos still hold these ideas in reverence.

**5. Do you have any familiarity with mythological creatures?**

**Figure 3.1**

*Philippine mythology people's familiarity.*



Among the 20 respondents, there are 16 who say they are familiar with these mythological creatures, and there are 4 who say they are not familiar with them. The chart shows that most of the respondents are familiar with mythology. Based on the

result of the survey questionnaire, 80% of the 20 people who answered have a particular knowledge or familiarity with mythological creatures, and only 20% of the rest have no idea about it. The findings indicate that there is a greater possibility that most Filipinos are familiar with mythology, even if most of the respondents were born in their mid-20s. It says that generation, they are also recognizing the culture and ideology of mythology.

**6. If yes, how did you first become aware of it? (Pertaining to question no.5)**

**Figure 3.2**

*Analyzing how the idea of mythology was first introduced to their lives.*

Read some stories
Through stories
sa mga comics s
animals
surroundings, community, and School
When I was 9yo. From horror movies & heresay.
no but for me those who know like our grandfather and grandmother are the ones who know better about the inexplicable wonders around us.
When I was a child, through stories from my grandparents.
province
from the tale and movies
I'm not really aware about mythological creatures, but I know that there are some Mythological creatures existing here in our world made by evils
It is because these creatures are mostly shown in televisions and are featured in story books.
It started from the heresays of old generations and stories from people living in isolated areas and also, part of our subject in college



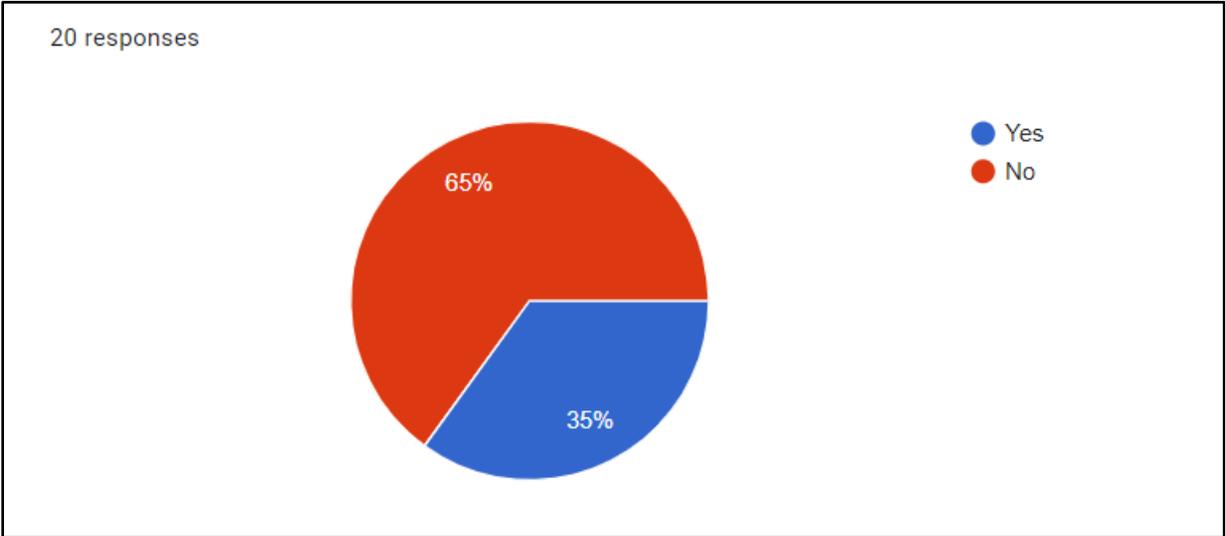
When I was a kid, stories from my auntie and uncle.
When I was 9 yrs old
Elementary during discussion and in the television
Childhood tuwing mag uundas my panuorin na ang titulo ay MGB magandang gabi bayan by noli de castro.

This section provides more information regarding the respondents' initial exposure to the mythology principle or the first place they encountered the concept. It shows that most of their experiences came from the stories of their grandmother and grandfather, from schools, television, or in their province. The influence of media, whether it's just a story, came from somewhere in their surroundings, from books or movies, as well as in school. In conclusion, the distribution of knowledge in society is greatly influenced by the entertainment sector and educational institutions.

**7. Do you believe in mythological creatures?**

**Figure 4.1**

*Determining the respondents' level of realism regarding mythology.*



As shown by the pie chart, 35% of the 20 respondents do believe in mythological creatures and 65% do not. Out of the 20, 13 people do not believe it, and there are 7 who are. As a result, I can say that regardless of whether mythology is true or just a belief, people have different ways of determining if an ideology is true or false based on their own experiences and interactions with it.

**8. If yes, why do you believe? (Pertaining to question no.7)**

**Figure 4.2**

*Determining the factors that influence believing in mythology.*

I don't believe in mythological creatures
minsang kasi naniniwala ako sa mga ganyan eh, hindi lang namn tayo yung nakatira sa mundong ito syempre may mga bagay unexplainable,
Because its true i saw it on my two eyes
When I was a little child living in Makati City, I was a victim of Dwende or Nuno Sa Punsó. I always get sick the next day after peeing in the garden plants or trees of our landlord. After that, our albularyo said, "Nanuno daw ako, at dapat mag tabi tabi ka bago umihi." Also, she performed a candle ritual, yung patutuluin nya wax ng kandila sa palangganang maliit at dun makikita itsura ng dwende. Since that time, lagi na ako nag tatabi tabi po bago umihi in the paligid.
No, because i don't see anything mythological creatures like kapre and mangkukulam
I saw one when I was a child

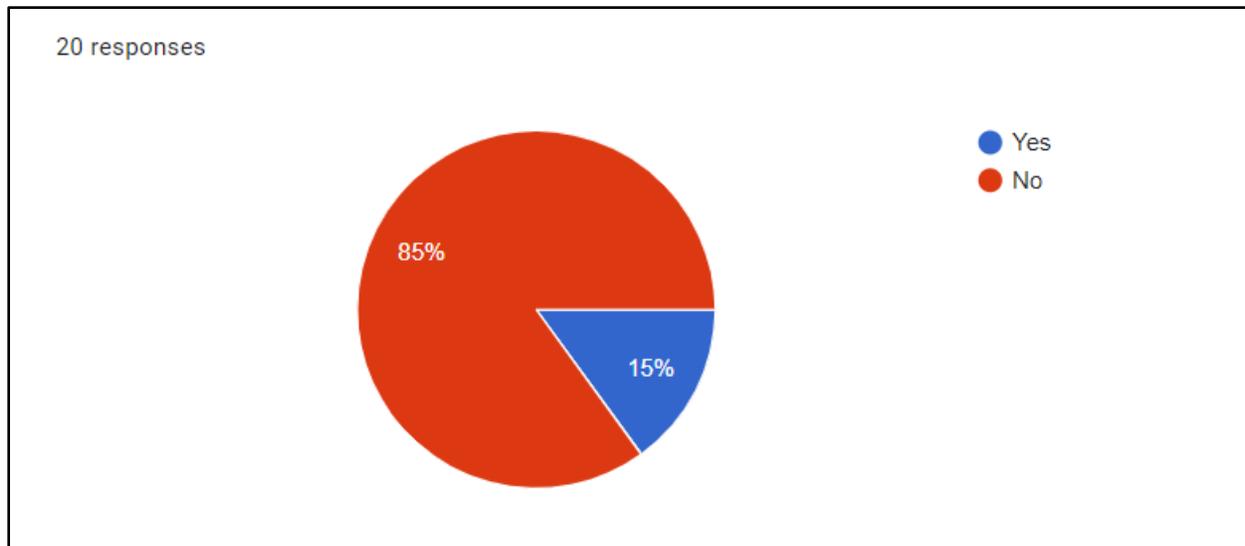
Because there are some witches here in Philippines who are still existing
I do not believe in any of those.
Because my relatives experienced it first-hand.
Kapre

Although the majority of respondents said they did not believe in mythical creatures, some claimed to have seen them with their two eyes. Others hold the belief that there are life forms besides humans on this earth, along with other unexplainable phenomena. Some have even claimed that our country consists of witches. According to the result, I'm able to form the notion that maybe these creatures show themselves to some person who somehow can see unusual creatures, or whether they are manipulated by their imagination as well as the influence of the things that they are playing on the cellphone or the show on TV.

**9. Have you already encountered a mythological creature?**

**Figure 5.1**

*Determining the respondents' level of realism regarding to mythology.*



85% of people said that they have not encountered a mythological creature, and 15% said yes. Among the 20 respondents, 3 said they had encountered it, and the remaining 17 are negative. As I said earlier, maybe these creatures appear to someone who has been born with the capacity to feel or see unusual beings, or perhaps they are influenced by their imagination as well as the games or TV shows they are watching or playing on their gadgets.

**10. If yes, what kind of Philippine mythological creature did you encountered?  
(Pertaining to question no.9)**

**Figure 5.2**

*Examining the interaction between humans and myths.*

When i was young i used to play on the forest by myself and i got sick and told my the doctor Kwak Kwak there's someone in the forest a Dwarfs.

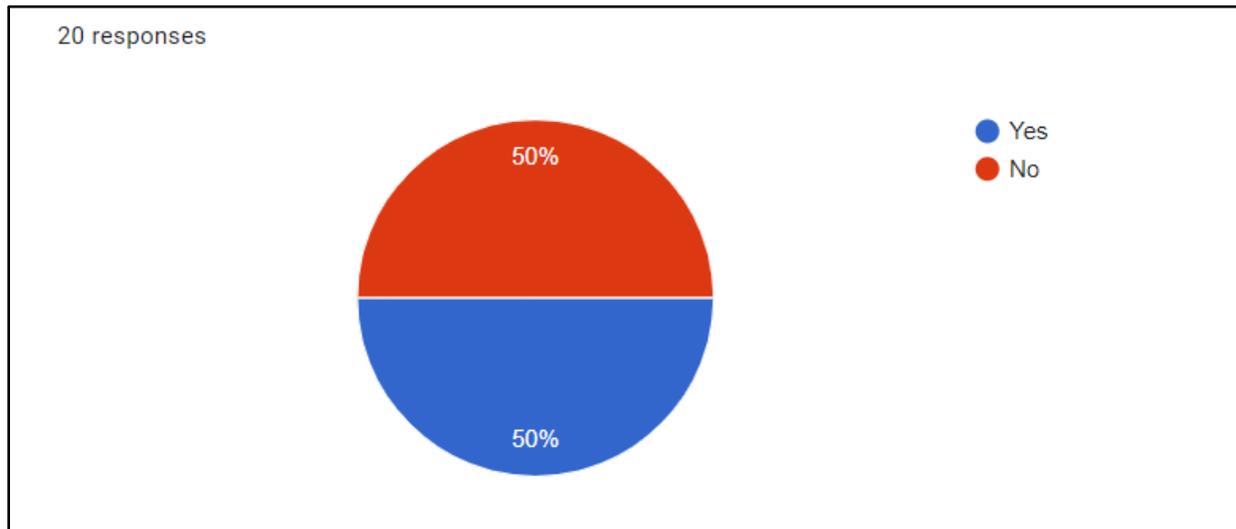
When I was a little child living in Makati City, I was a victim of Dwende or Nuno Sa Punsó. I always get sick the next day after peeing in the garden plants or trees of our landlord. After that, our albularyo said, "Nanuno daw ako, at dapat mag tabi tabi ka bago umihi." Also, she performed a candle ritual, yung patutuluin nya wax ng kandila sa palangganang maliit at dun makikita itsura ng dwende. Since that time, lagi na ako nag tatabi tabi po bago umihi in the paligid.

These two answers by the respondents convey the same kind of mythological creatures. The stories both conceptualized the dwarfs, which they claimed they had seen.

**11. In the modern-day environment, do you still hear or encounter certain folklore practices and customs?**

**Figure 6.1**

*Folklore in today's modern-day environment.*



The pie chart indicates that somehow there is a divide in perspective about the existence of folklore considering today's modern times. I have concluded that there is a possibility that our folklore, in line with our cultural beliefs, might eventually fall because of the dubious percentage result, an indication of the unsure viewpoint of the respondents.

**12. If yes, what particular practices have you encountered?  
(Pertaining to question no.11)**

**Figure 6.2**

*Folklore in today's modern-day environment.*

Witchcraft
Say "tabi-tabi" po when peeing in an unfamiliar place
wala namn minsan sa mga vid or sa mga palabas ganun, karamihan sa jessaca soho talga eh
Pagpag, lawayan ang mga sanggol para hindi mabati, magkasakit
The black cat, dwende, fairies who are taking care of a place.
traditional dances and music also the art and rituals, that we encounter during fiesta or any celebration.
Most common folklore that i have encountered are the folklore about the burials, because many Filipinos are still believing about it because of their religion
First, we shouldn't sweep at night because luck won't be on our side. Second, when a spoon and fork fell on the ground, either a man or a woman will suddenly arrive. And lastly, if you saw a black cat, it means that something bad will happen.
First, we shouldn't sweep at night because luck won't be on our side. Second, when a spoon and fork fell on the ground, either a man or a woman will suddenly arrive. And lastly, if you saw a black cat, it means that something bad will happen.
Always says "tabi-tabi po" when encountered a pinaniniwalaang bahay ng duwende.
reading folklore tales that gives golden lesson
Sa patay..bago daw dumating ang patay sa pagbuburulan kailangan takipan ng itim na tela ang lahat ng salamin..

Despite modern circumstances, figures 6.2 and 6.3 show the indication that our culture is rich.

### **13. How do Filipino mythology and folklore influence the way you live?**

#### **Figure 7.1**

*Mythology and folklore in the lives of the Filipinos.*

I know some people from a Family of the said witchcraft, and hard to get along with them

I still do it even though I don't believe in it. Just like what my grandma used to say "Wala naman mawawala"

hmm may mga taong naniniwala sa ganyan or may mga tao na hindi naniniwala. bilang studyante may 50% siguro ako naniniwala or bigyan ako ng facts.at grabe kasi yung impluwensya ng mga ninuno natin eh

To scared the children to obey them when they got outside

Sometimes we cannot help to hear others to talk about these kind of belief and it made us think what if it is real so we become curious and sometimes we believe in it. It is not necessarily influence the way we live but we just got curiosity to it.

It influences me in the sense that it teaches us to be mindful and respectful of our surroundings, na hindi lang tayo ang nahihirahan sa mundo ito.

Does not affects me as I do not practice it & does not believe in it.

My opinion, mythological is a story that is told by those who are older than us and the folklore beliefs here are what people believe that is what can be translated to a person

There are some instances in life that I would incorporate these beliefs to my everyday living. For example, when I go to a place I'm not familiar, I would pay respect to the mythological creatures who are believed to be taking care of the place.

They influence in beliefs in how they will be lived and prtected

they give an idea and to deeply know our culture, and traditional that may encounter in the Philippines only.

They are not giving me freedom when the folklores are encountered

Nothing

These beliefs changes the perspective of other Filipinos to the point that they follow almost every folklore because of the fear of unluckiness. However, since I do not believe in all of those, I am not that affected about it.

Be good to all even non living or living things

Folklore taught so much specially in characteristics of an individual. It's like you will hold on to it or just don't give a sense of care to it. It made me live with fear that at some point they exist and made me wonder what if they do really exist or even existing? Am I living good with their eyes or am I just a person disturbing their peace out of it.

I became more careful and attentive on my surroundings because I learned that we, the human, doesn't the only one that lives in Earth but also other myth. I also learned on respecting the tradition of other than me.

This gives my life thrill and full of curiosity. There are times that I want to see mythological creatures in real life but at the same time there is fear. In folklore maybe there are times that I felt that is so weird or my actions become limited. But it also teach me to value our culture.

It influence me in a way na tuwing maguundas sa panuorin na MGB of noli de castro..it bonded us as a family dahil sa nakakatakot ito na panuorin?kailangan sama sama kaming pamilya sa panunuod nito..and folklore?sa paglalagay ng mga itim na tela sa mga salamin bago dumating ang patay..maihahantulad ko ito sa buhay na dapat magpatuloy tyo sa paggawa ng kabutihan at tama dahil hindi natin alam?kung hanggang kailan lng ang itatagal natin dito sa mundong ibabaw.

Different answers and viewpoints have been expressed. It has been seen in every circumstance we face, various life experiences while growing up, as well as the influence of the people around us, society, and the community we usually live in. I have also learned to give much respect to the fundamental principles that this study or topic has. To give Filipinos a chance to discover and adapt the untold narrative of what is the primary cause for their existence, it would be in my utmost interest as a creative and an artist to portray the true stories behind what we typically know about these phenomena.

## Conclusion

Folklore and mythological culture are the essential foundation that came from the spirit of the people. It is the roots that serve as morale that build the identity that matters. A society's cultural identity is shaped by its practices, beliefs, and stories, which are passed down through the generations and are constantly referred to as mythological culture. In the production and preservation of culture, mythology is necessary. It is a powerful instrument for expressing ideas, principles, and beliefs. Throughout history, myths have been employed to defend religious rituals, explain the natural world, and encourage moral behavior. Understanding that these myths are more than simply stories but rather a way of life is the fundamental essence of the identity of a nation. Folklore contributes to the preservation of cultural traditions. Traditions are passed down from one generation to the next through different channels and mediums. People can better comprehend their culture by analyzing folklore. These stories served as an explanation for both human behavior and the natural world. In addition, myths can be used to explain moral behavior. Moral lessons can be learned from many stories of myth and folklore. These narratives inspire individuals to act in a responsible and just

manner. They act as a path for people to uphold ethical principles and maintain communal harmony.

As a multimedia artist, I provided visual representation through a digital painting portrait series that tackles my argument in this research and helped increase awareness among my target audience regarding cultural assimilation's detrimental impacts on preserving Philippine cultures and mythologies in a technologically revolutionized world.

## **Recommendations**

### **Research Topic**

In terms of the schedule used for developing and carrying out the preliminary surveys, this research still has room for improvement. I conducted only one preliminary survey, which reached 20 respondents. At first, I am holding back from gathering a survey, but I realize that it is beneficial to know the viewpoint of my respondents, and they are the reason I came up with this kind of topic. To get the predicted number of responses in the allotted amount of time, extensive preparation of the survey questions should be considered. This will prevent me from repeating or creating more than one preliminary survey, which I almost do. I should also distribute the questions in advance so that I may find as many potential respondents as possible and have as much broad information as necessary, but its outcomes are still important to how I create my digital paintings. Lastly, due to the time constraints, the demands of different subjects, and the variety of activities that I have attended outside of school, a longer duration of preparation is needed to fully polish all the ideas that are present, and they might be revised or improved if the time is exceeded.

### **Creative Process**

Regarding the materials employed and the timetable for production, the chosen method and medium by which digital painting printed on canvas is produced, which is the main plan of the output research, can still be improved. The visual subjects used in the digital painting may still be modified and composed accordingly, as well as how the artwork itself is arranged and made. It should also be considered the material used and how durable and stabilized it was, especially the item used in hanging the artwork. I was also concerned about the items' accessibility and the probability that I could locate them somewhere. Thankfully, some of my friends have access to and contact with the digital shop and frame store that are intended to make the plan possible. In addition, for further improvement of the outputs, the process, and the life span of the digital painting, I decided to print it on canvas. I also used a combination of colors that will provide the emotions that are intended and connected to the theme and the overall required vibe. The final aspect of planning a more effective manner to work and produce the output can be further assisted by following the Gantt chart and the production timetable.



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