



The Legendary Struggle: A Hero's Journey

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Abstract: The hero's journey is a timeless narrative framework that explores the transformative journey of a protagonist facing trials, tribulations, and personal growth. Along their journey, they face inner and outer challenges, battling monsters, facing moral dilemmas, and ultimately undergoing a profound transformation. This study focused on *The Legendary Struggle: A Hero's Journey*. A direct content analysis approach was used in the selected epic stories in the Philippines such as *Ibalon*, *Indarapatra and Sulayman*, *Hinilawod*, *Hudhud of Aliguyon*, and *Kudaman* by examining the struggles of a hero's journey in terms of separation, initiation, and return. The results indicated in the separation phase have an emotional impact on the hero's part and most likely on the family members and the people around. Moreover, the hero felt bothered because he would be away from his loved ones and homeland. In the initiation phase, the hero has struggles and challenges in his journey where he needs to fight to preserve the role, defend the homeland, and fight in the name of love. In the return phase, the hero struggles in returning home due to hindrances as obstacles. Despite all the struggles encountered by the heroes they still managed to return home safely.

Keywords: Hero's Journey, Hero's Homeland, Hero's Struggles, Leaving for a Mission, Epic Stories, Challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

The hero's journey is a timeless narrative framework that explores the transformative journey of a protagonist facing trials, tribulations, and personal growth. Along their journey, they face inner and outer challenges, battling monsters, facing moral dilemmas, and ultimately undergoing a profound transformation. However, beyond the enticing and moving story, there were struggles hidden in the heart of the legendary hero in the story. These legendary heroes' have struggled due to separation from their families just to protect their homeland and other communities in far places, initiation is also one of the struggles of the legendary heroes because they needed to fight their enemies and intruders to defend the people in the community, and their struggles when they return because they needed to rebuild their family bond in the cases when the heroes went

on a mission away from home and the community. These struggles have impacted a lot on the legendary hero because he has a lot of things to consider whenever he is away from his family and there is no assurance that he can go back to his family alive, if he may return what would be things he will do the regain his rapport with family or loved ones. For this reason, there is a need to investigate these phenomena to determine how the legendary hero surpassed all struggles and challenges during his journey.

On the other hand, there were similar stories that a certain hero faced overwhelming struggles in his journey like the Indian epic story of *Ramayana* who followed the journey of Prince Rama as he set out to rescue his wife Sita, who had been kidnapped by the demon king Ravana. Rama faces numerous

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trials and challenges, ultimately leading to a climactic battle between good and evil. Likewise, Baltog faced the same struggles in an Ibalon story from Bikol, Philippines where Baltog pursued the boar and killed it, not with a weapon but by breaking its jaws with his strong arms. These epic stories presented how a hero faced struggles in his journey, and he managed to win the fight with his opponents. However, these two stories mentioned above have not stated the specific struggles of a legendary hero in his journey during separation, initiation, and return.

In this light, the researchers decided to conduct the study because we wanted to investigate how a hero surpassed his struggles in his journey given the fact that they all faced challenges with their strong and mighty enemies, but they still managed to win and survive. Moreover, the study aimed not only to interpret the intricate nuances of a hero's journey but also to shed light on the enduring relevance and universal appeal of these narratives in contemporary discourse, while identifying their struggles in terms of separation, initiation, and return of a hero.

Theoretical Lense

This content analysis was anchored to the theory of John Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey," known as the monomyth. The Hero's Journey was a universal narrative pattern that Campbell identified in myths, legends, and stories from cultures around the world. Campbell's theory suggested that the hero's journey was a recurring motif found in myths and stories across different cultures and historical periods. Above all, the researchers recognized the timeless significance of these tales as vehicles for cultural preservation and expression, resonating across generations and enriching the collective consciousness of humanity.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to examine the hero's journey in Philippine epic tales, focusing on how the stories were told in terms of departure/separation, initiation, and return of a hero. It sought to understand the struggles and challenges encountered by the hero on his journey. By using Campbell's theory of the Hero's Journey, the study aimed to reveal the struggles of a hero's journey in three stages which are separation, initiation, and return.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What were the struggles of a hero's journey in terms of separation, initiation, and return?

Selected Short Epic Stories:

- "IBALON"- By Mariano Goyena Del Prado
- "INDARAPATA AND SULAYNA" - By Bartolome del Valle

- "HINILAWOD" - By F. Landa Jocano
- "HUDHUD NI ALIGUYON" - By Amador Taguinod Daguio (Jr.)
- "EPIKONG KUDAMAN" - By Nicole Revel Macdonald and Edgar Maranan

METHOD

This study employed the "Directed Content Analysis Approach." Directed content analysis was generally more structured than inductive methods in that you began your research by identifying key concepts, categories, or themes as initial coding categories based on previous research on the topic (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). In addition, Directed Content Analysis was a qualitative research method that analyzed textual or visual material based on preset categories or themes. Researchers began with pre-existing conceptions or hypotheses. As a result, the analysis was guided to focus on specific features of the content. Directed content analysis was commonly used in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, communication studies, and education to explore complex phenomena, understand patterns of behavior, and generate insights into human experiences. By systematically applying predefined categories or themes to textual data, researchers could uncover meaningful patterns and relationships that contributed to our understanding of the research topic.

According to Campbell (1982), the departure or separation states that every story begins with its version of "Once Upon a Time." In the ordinary world, the hero was living a normal, boring life, usually without the cosmic-level conflict that was present later. At some point, the hero found himself being called on an adventure—perhaps he looked longingly in the distance at something, or an invitation to go somewhere, or he had a run-in with a character that asked for help. Something not fully out of the ordinary—but slightly out of the ordinary—beckoned the would-be hero to find out more. The initiation, at this point, the hero had left the ordinary world and entered the world of adventure, and the next six stages dealt with the hero's struggles there. Campbell called these stages initiation because he believed that this was the process that made the hero into the hero. The return, at this point in the hero's journey, the hero had left the ordinary world and achieved their objective in the world of adventure. Campbell noticed that stories following the monomythic cycle could go in different directions here, and modern storytelling had taken up the theme as well, suggesting that the following stages were not always all included in a mythic or modern narrative.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Content Analysis						
Research Problems	Ibalon	Indarapatra and Sulayman	Hinilawod	Hudhod ni Aliguyon	Epikong Kudaman	Themes
<p>1. What were the struggles of a hero's journey in terms of separation?</p>	<p>The hero starts with his journey.</p> <p><i>-Handyong departed from Ibalon to embark on his quest to defeat the beasts terrorizing the land.</i></p> <p><i>-The first man was Baltog, originally from Botavara and of the race Lipod. His 'linsa,' or gabi plants, were the lushest in the place but were destroyed by a great Tandayag boar. Furious, Baltog pursued the boar and killed it, not with a lance but by breaking its jaws with his strong arms.</i></p> <p><i>-Soon after, Handyong came to Bikol and destroyed the wild creatures that roamed the land. In</i></p>	<p>The hero is requested to go on a mission.</p> <p><i>"He called his warrior brother, Sulayman, and requested the latter to proceed to Mindanao and save the people from the monsters."</i></p> <p><i>-Adventurous at heart, Sulayman immediately consented to go to Mindanao. While he was preparing, Indarapatra gave him a ring and a kris. Then, taking a young sapling, Indarapatra planted it beneath the window of their house. He said to Sulayman, "If this tree lives, you live; if it dies, you die. Also, by this tree, I shall know when you are in trouble.</i></p>	<p>The hero begins his journey, and it takes several days.</p> <p><i>"As Labaw Dongon set out to defeat the monster Makabagting and win a maiden's hand, he encountered significant challenges. The formidable monster suggested an intense battle, testing Labaw despite his magical gear—cape, hat, belt, and kampilan—provided by his mother, Goddess Alunsina.</i></p> <p><i>His mission's stakes were raised by the need to prove his worth to the maiden's father, adding emotional and psychological pressure to the physical dangers. Moreover, the unfamiliar terrain of Handug complicated his journey, requiring strategic</i></p>	<p>The hero began his journey to confront challenges and left home to prove his worth as a warrior by facing Pumbakhayon, his father's enemy's son.</p> <p><i>"Men 1: (ran towards where Pumbakhayon was) Pumbakhayon! Some men are asking for a battle with your father, Pangaiwan."</i></p> <p><i>"Pumbakhayon: (laughed) A battle?"</i></p> <p><i>"Maybe they were just lost and were asking for help instead."</i></p> <p><i>"Men 1: I was certain that they wanted a fight, Pumbakhayon."</i></p> <p><i>"Pumbakhayon: Well then, let me see. Lead the way. (walked towards Aliguyon)."</i></p> <p><i>"Pumbakhayon: What is it that you want?"</i></p> <p><i>"Aliguyon: I am Aliguyon, the son of Amtulao, from the village of Hannanga. I came here to</i></p>	<p>The hero left home and pursued the mission.</p> <p><i>"Kudaman said, 'Surutan Tamparan, Father, I have come here to bring your daughter back to your authority. She must be punished for the sin of adultery. Everyone under my jurisdiction says she has been meeting with a man named Binata ng Alapaap."</i></p> <p><i>"Binibini ng Saytang Dagat replied, 'Father, he is just a persistent suitor. He is stubborn and unyielding. Yes, we...'"</i></p> <p><i>"Surutan Tamparan said, 'You know, my child, what the proper punishment for adultery is in our family. And if you are proven innocent, you</i></p>	<p>Leaving the Homeland for a Mission</p>

Content Analysis						
Research Problems	Ibalon	Indarapatra and Sulayman	Hinilawod	Hudhod ni Aliguyon	Epikong Kudaman	Themes
	<i>Ponong, he slew, after a ten-month fight, the beasts with one eye and three throats, winged sharks under the sea, wild carabaos, and man-eating crocodiles bigger than boats. To the mountain Kulasi, he exiled the 'sarimaw,' and buried in Hantik all the serpents whose voices rang like sirens.</i>		<i>adaptability in unfamiliar battlegrounds.</i>	<i>challenge Pangaiwan to a battle.</i> "Pumbakhayon: <i>I accept your challenge. Wait here for a moment while I gather my men."</i>	<i>have nothing to fear because you will live again from death. As your father, I will sentence you by beheading for the crime of adultery. I will do this one month from now in the middle of the sea."</i> "Kudaman: <i>replied, 'I must leave now, Father. I want...'</i> <i>"I must leave now, Father. I wanted to see that man. Whatever he had done to me, whether good or bad, I would repay him accordingly."</i>	
2. What were the struggles of a hero's journey in terms of initiation?	The hero fights his enemies to defeat them but sometimes they have weaknesses and are outsmarted by their foes <i>"Handiong came to Bikol and destroyed the wild creatures roaming the land. In Ponong he slew, after a</i>	The hero who is equipped with fighting skills and power never loses in a battle Sulayman vs. Tarabusaw: <i>"...The young warrior parried the blows and returned the attack. At last, Tarabusaw became exhausted. Seeing this,</i>	The hero's fight to secure his fate and for love. "...Labaw Donggon: <i>Inay! I want to ask for a magic cape, hat, belt, and kampilan as I heard a beautiful maiden lives in Handug. I want to make this journey to find the right woman that I'm going to marry.</i>	The hero has the prowess to fight his opponents. "Pumbakhayon: <i>Remarkable! You had very good fighting skills!"</i> "Aliguyon: <i>Of course, I had! It was your fault for underestimating me!"</i> "Girls: <i>Kill him! Kill him! Kill him, Pumbakhayon!"</i> "Girl 1: <i>Rip his head off!</i>	The hero came to fight and defend his homeland. "Tuwan Putli: <i>We wouldn't let you go to war. Let's leave this land and go somewhere far where the Ilanon couldn't follow."</i> "Kudaman: <i>Tuwan, this was my</i>	Fight and Win Despite all Struggles -Fight to preserve the role -Fight to defend the homeland -Fight in the name of love

Content Analysis						
Research Problems	Ibalon	Indarapatra and Sulayman	Hinilawod	Hudhod ni Aliguyon	Epikong Kudaman	Themes
	<p>ten-month fight, the beasts with one eye and three throats, winged sharks under the sea, wild carabaos, and man-eating crocodiles bigger than boats. To the mountain Kulasi, he exiled the "sarimaw", and buried in Hantik all the serpents whose voices rang like sirens."</p> <p>Handiong vs. Oriol: "One elusive snake, however, he failed to subdue despite all his effort. Known as Oriol, the snake was sometimes a serpent woman. To Handiong, Oriol was a challenge, for even if he would bind her a thousand times, she would scoff mockingly at him and cleverly untie her knots. With sweet words,</p>	<p>Sulayman gave the monster a heavy blow with his sword. The blade found its way through Tarabusaw's armpit. The monster gave a horrible cry and fell. As it lay dying, it looked up to Sulayman and congratulated the youthful hero. The latter, however, answered, "Your evil deeds are responsible for your death and not my skill in combat."</p> <p>Sulayman vs Pah: "...Suddenly the world became dark. He looked up and he saw a huge bird descending upon him. He knew he was in danger. He took his sword and struck the attacking creature. The bird fell dead, but its huge wings fell on Sulayman. This killed the</p>	<p>"Humadapnon: A pleasant evening, brother."</p> <p>"Buyong Makabagting: A pleasant evening. I am Buyong Makabagting, son of the mighty Datu Balahidyong of Paling Bukid. I will fight for his maiden and declare he would pass everything just for her. "Burigadang Pada Sinaklang Bulawan, my love, I will pass everything just for you."</p> <p>"Humadapnon: Burigadang Pada Sinaklang Bulawan?? I am going to ask her to marry me."</p> <p>"Buyong Makabagting: I will go to marry her. I'm the first one! Let's take it in a battle; whoever wins will be the one who can proceed to marry her." "Humadapnon: Challenge accepted!"</p>	<p>Girl 2: Yes! Bring his head for our village to be at peace!"</p>	<p>homeland. My ancestors defended this land to their last breath, and I had to do the same."</p> <p>"Binibini ng Saytang Dagat: Promised us you would return. We would rather die than fall into the hands of the savage Ilanon. We needed you, Kudaman."</p>	

Content Analysis						
Research Problems	Ibalon	Indarapatra and Sulayman	Hinilawod	Hudhod ni Aliguyon	Epikong Kudaman	Themes
	<i>she would entice Handiong, who would search the forests for her. But she was seductive as well as deceitful."</i>	<i>Mantapuli hero."</i>	<i>Divine tasks set by Huyung Adlaw had tested his physical, moral, and spiritual mettle, reflecting the high divine and personal stakes of his mission.</i>			
3. What were the struggles of a hero's journey in terms of his return?	<p>The hero observes his furious enemy so he can put him down immediately and return home immediately.</p> <p><i>"Smart Bantong first tried to find out about the monster's habits. And he guessed right: Rabot slept heavily all day long as he simply rolled over the ground." After watching him for days, Bantong slew the monster in two parts and brought the corpse to Libmanan where Handiong viewed the remains amidst the loud</i></p>	<p>The hero was dead but soon alive and managed to return home.</p> <p><i>"Suddenly the world became dark. He looked up and he saw a huge bird descending upon him. He knew he was in danger. He took his sword and struck the attacking creature. The bird fell dead, but its huge wings fell on Sulayman. This killed the Mantapuli hero."</i></p> <p><i>"Indarapatra cried with grief. He looked for vines with which he could tie together the bones of his brother because he decided to bring these</i></p>	<p>The hero still fighting in his journey before returning home.</p> <p><i>"Uyutang: Are you here to see the princess? Don't expect her to like you! Dumalapidap: I'm not here for you, so let me pass. Uyutang: If that's the case, fight me!"</i></p>	<p>The hero has returned to his village in darkness, Aliguyon faces fresh challenges. Despite the jubilation over his victory, he noticed the neglected rice fields and queried his father.</p> <p><i>"Pumbakhayan: I see, so you came here to fight because you knew that if we fought here now, we wouldn't reach your rice field. Protecting it from being destroyed? That's a little unfair, don't you think?"</i></p> <p><i>"Dumulao: That's enough! (the fighting stopped)."</i></p>	<p>The hero has returned home for a wedding.</p> <p><i>Kudaman's return home to marry his ten wives was more than a personal triumph; it was a multifaceted endeavor that involved logistical, interpersonal, economic, and spiritual challenges, each requiring careful thought and deliberate action to ensure that the union strengthened rather than divided.</i></p>	Survival of the Fittest

Content Analysis						
Research Problems	Ibalon	Indarapatra and Sulayman	Hinilawod	Hudhod ni Aliguyon	Epikong Kudaman	Themes
	<i>rejoicing of his people.”</i>	<i>back to Mantapuli. However, he saw a jar of water not far from him. He knew that the jar came from the sky. So, he reached for it and poured its content over the scattered bones of Sulayman. Sulayman stood up and rubbed his eyes as though he had just awakened from a long sleep. They embraced each other in joy. Sulayman went home to Mantapuli while Indarapatra proceeded to Mount Gurayu. There he met the dreadful bird that had seven heads. He conquered this monster with the use of his sword, just pakal.”</i>				

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is the synopsis of the data gathered through the epic stories being chosen by the researchers. A direct content analysis approach was employed about the topic The Legendary Struggle: A Hero’s Journey in terms of departure/separation, initiation, and return.

The researchers set the themes into three (3) phrases which embodied the major themes: *Leaving the Homeland for a Mission, Fight and Win Despite all Struggles, and Survival of the Fittest.*

Theme 1: Leaving the Homeland for a Mission

Theme 1 in the separation phase of a hero’s journey, discussed the struggles of a hero when he

left his homeland for a mission. This phase of a hero's journey begins to commence when he needs to leave the ordinary world where he lives as a normal individual, but later he finds himself as a hero and is called on a mission to help other living creatures who asked for help.

As it is presented in the table the hero has departed from Ibalon to embark on his quest to defeat the beasts terrorizing the land. On the other hand, in the story of Indarapatra and Sulayman, Indarapatra called his warrior brother, Sulayman, and requested the latter to proceed to Mindanao and save the people from the monsters. Sulayman immediately consented to go to Mindanao. Moreover, in the story of Hudhud ni Aliguyon, it stated that "I came here to challenge Pangaiwan to a battle." However, the two other stories have presented about leaving for a mission but with a different purpose which is to make this journey to find the right woman that I'm going to marry (Hinilawod Story), and I have come here to bring your daughter back to your authority. She must be punished for the sin of adultery (Epikong Kudaman Story).

These statements presented above have shown an emotionally significant impact on the hero's part and probably on the family members and the people around governed by the hero. These events have led both parties to be worried and feared of what the future holds for a hero's journey. Moreover, the hero felt bothered in the sense that he will be away from his loved ones and homeland, these struggles are commonly faced by the hero in the story but also mirror the life of every Filipino when loved ones or family members go abroad for work to help the family needs and elevate the family status. This event is a profound struggle of the Filipinos in real-life situations, for that reason, it is mostly reflected in some Philippine Literature. Though the stories above talked about leaving for a mission, I want to highlight that every hero's journey has different purposes for leaving their homeland like Sulayman a brother of Indarapatra who accepted his brother's request to be in Mindanao to fight for the monsters who are destructing the place and killing some innocent people. Furthermore, heroes left their homelands to secure the place to maintain peace and order of the area neither in their homeland, places nearby, or far areas. These are the struggles and challenges that a hero will encounter on his journey to fight their enemies who are creating great chaos in different places. On the contrary, some heroes must leave their homeland to search for a woman to marry, but they must undergo some battles before winning the heart of the woman they love. Aside from that other heroes are on the mission to search and captivate an individual who transgressed against them.

Theme 2: Fight and Win Despite All Struggles

Theme 2 in the initiation phase of a hero's journey discussed the struggles and challenges of a hero's journey that he encountered. It summarizes the common struggles experienced by a hero while he is on the journey and some of them are presented in *Sub-theme 1: Fight to preserve the role, Sub-theme 2: Fight to defend the homeland, and Sub-theme 3: Fight in the name of love.*

Sub-Theme 1: Fight To Preserve the Role

This sub-theme explains the struggles experienced by a hero while he is on the journey and discovers that he needs to fight to preserve his role as a hero. On this matter, he needs to fight strongly to preserve his role as a hero but also as a leader of his homeland, this battle is significant to him because his people and family are waiting for him back home. This idea was also evident in the other heroes in the story mentioned above. These ideas are evident in the stories of Ibalon, Indarapatra Sulayman, and Hinilawod.

In the Ibalon story it was mentioned by the writer stated that "*Handiong came to Bikol and destroyed the wild creatures roaming the land. On the other hand, in the Indarapatra and Sulayman story the writer also mentioned that "...The young warrior parried the blows and returned the attack. At last, Tarabusaw became exhausted. Seeing this, Sulayman gave the monster a heavy blow with his sword. The blade found its way through Tarabusaw's armpit. The monster gave a horrible cry and fell. As it lay dying, it looked up to Sulayman and congratulated the youthful hero. Also, in the Hinilawod story, the writer mentioned that "Huyung Adlaw had tested his physical, moral, and spiritual mettle, reflecting the high divine and personal stakes of his mission."*

In these statements from the three different epic stories, it can be told that heroes were exerting a big amount of effort and strength to fight strongly in the battle against their foes to preserve their role as a hero and as leaders of their homeland. The potential to be a hero is in all of us. This is no mere platitude; it reflects a deep and simple truth: heroism is an extreme form of everyday ethical behavior (Kraft-Todd & Rand, 2016). This battle is bloody and shows no mercy to one another, but a hero needs to fight and win the battle even if he struggles with how to defeat the opponent, nevertheless, he must find ways to win the battle so he can return home and meet again his family and his people. Meanwhile, the hero has preserved his role as a mighty hero and a great leader of their homeland. Heroes were frequently described as both brave and courageous (Kinsella, *et al.*, 2017).

Sub-Theme 2: Fight to Defend the Homeland

This sub-theme explains the struggles encountered by a hero while he is on the journey, and he realizes that he needs to fight to defend his homeland. Defending his homeland against intruders and antagonists is significantly valuable and worth fighting for because this is the land where he lived together with his family and the people living in the land. As a hero this a huge burden and challenge to carry because the entire community believes in their hero or leader. In line with this, the hero must adhere to these struggles and keep the homeland free from enemies and destructors. This is evident in the stories of Ibalon and Kudaman.

In the Ibalon story it was mentioned by the writer stated that *"Handiong came to Bikol and destroyed the wild creatures roaming the land. In Ponong he slew, after a ten-month fight, the beasts with one eye and three throats, winged sharks under the sea, wild carabaos, and man-eating crocodiles bigger than boats. To the mountain Kulasi, he exiled the "sarimaw", and buried in Hantik all the serpents whose voices rang like sirens."* Meanwhile, in the Kudaman story the writer stated that Kudaman told Tuwan that *"this was my homeland. My ancestors defended this land to their last breath, and I had to do the same."*

In this scenario, the hero in the story has done everything just to protect and defend their homeland from their adversaries. Protecting and defending one's homeland is analogous to protecting and defending your own family. For this reason, these statements instill the significance and value of a family in a home because this is how family members interact with each other and how training, values, and instructions are taught by the parents to their children for them to become better citizens in society. Moreover, the family at home teaches about ethics because this is also an important matter to learn at home so that children become well-mannered wherever they go. Ethics were central to the practice of administration, but the broad field of public administration had difficulty articulating clear and meaningful standards of behavior and developing means of upholding a code of ethics (Svara, 2014). In line with this, the reasons why the heroes in these stories defend their homeland because they think of their families, relatives, and the community for whom they have valued them deeply. I think these are some of their struggles on their journey as a hero on how to continuously defend, maintain, and sustain their place which they called it home.

Sub-Theme 3: Fight in the Name of Love

This sub-theme talks about the struggles encountered by a hero while he is on the journey, and he understands that there is a necessity to fight in the

name of love. In all stories love is commonly used as a theme because everyone can relate and it is part of human existence which to appreciate the love, feel the love, and show the love. On the other hand, this becomes a struggle of a hero in one of his journeys probably which is the struggle to fight and win the battle in the name of love. This theme is very evident in the story of Hinilawod and Kudaman.

In the Hinilawod story, the writer stated *"Buyong Makabagting: A pleasant evening. I am Buyong Makabagting, son of the mighty Datu Balahidnyong of Paling Bukid. I will fight for his maiden and declare he would pass everything just for her. "Burigadang Pada Sinaklang Bulawan, my love, I will pass everything just for you." In addition, Inay! I want to ask for a magic cape, hat, belt, and kampilan as I heard a beautiful maiden that lives in Handug. In connection, Kudaman's story has also stated about his quest for love "I want to make this journey to find the right woman that I'm going to marry. Kudaman's return home to marry his ten wives was more than a personal triumph..."*

In these statements, it is palpable that a hero has exerted his time and effort to win the battle against his opponent to secure his love for the woman he loves. In life, sometimes we need to face all struggles and challenges in the name of love because it is worth it to fight your love for the person whom you love the most, it takes courage and bravery to ensure that the love you are fighting for is worth it. Also, being true to what you feel will give you the highest form of love and happiness. "Living in truth to the daimon" was said to give rise to a particular form of happiness, termed eudaimonia, a set of subjective experiences labeled "feelings of personal expressiveness" (Waterman, 1990). In addition, fighting in the name of love gives a lot of self-realization and self-discovery. According to Unah (2011), self-discovery led to the development of the ethics of self-mastery.

Theme 3: Survival of the Fittest

Theme 3 in the return phase of the hero's journey discussed the struggles of a hero in the process of returning home. On the other hand, despite all the struggles faced by the heroes some of them have managed to return home safely and some of them did not make it for some reasons. In addition, it is evident that some stories or heroes are struggling to return home, but in the end the story ends happily and harmoniously as the stories of Hinilawod, Hudhud, and Epikong Kudaman, and some stories ended with tragedy just like in the story of Indarapatra and Sulayman where Sulayman was killed by a big bird, but soon after he was back to life.

In the statement taken from the epic Hinilawod, it stated: **“Uyutang:** *Are you here to see the princess? Don't expect her to like you! Dumalapidap:* *I'm not here for you, so let me pass. Uyutang:* *If that's the case, fight me!*”. The same with the story of Hudhud, **“Pumbakhayan:** *I see, so you came here to fight because you knew that if we fought here now, we wouldn't reach your rice field. Protecting it from being destroyed? That's a little unfair, don't you think?*”. In Kudaman story, **“Kudaman's return home to marry his ten wives was more than a personal triumph; it was a multifaceted endeavor that involved juggling logistical, interpersonal, economic, and spiritual challenges, each requiring careful thought and deliberate action to ensure that the union strengthened rather than divided.”** However, in the story of Indarapatra and Sulayman, the hero was not able to return. **“Suddenly the world became dark. He looked up and he saw a huge bird descending upon him. He knew he was in danger. He took his sword and struck the attacking creature. The bird fell dead, but its huge wings fell on Sulayman. This killed the Mantapuli hero.”** Meanwhile, Sulayman back to life after Indarapatra poured its content over the scattered bones of Sulayman. Sulayman stood up and rubbed his eyes as though he had just awakened from a long sleep. They embraced each other in joy. Indarapatra went back home, and Sulayman proceeded to Mount Gurayu.

The return phase of the hero's journey is a bitter-and-sweet outcome of the life of the protagonist in the story. Returning home from a journey faces a lot of struggles and obstacles that need to be faced before attaining sweet victory. As a hero it takes a lot of fighting skills and bravery to win every battle to succeed in the mission, he must have a strong heart to fight. Along with these skills, the hero must be holistically equipped to be able to succeed in challenges. In addition, a hero should have high faith and strong willpower to win his battles. According to Garmezy (1976) described resilient people as having “worked well, played well, loved well, and expected well. On the other hand, in the hero's journey, there were times also that fate will not align with a hero on his journey because there were times that a hero may fail also on their mission even if they are filled with power, prowess, and potentials they are still subject for disappointment in their battles because heroes have their strengths, but they have also weaknesses. Sometimes they win the fight, and sometimes they also lose. These achievements and failures have mirrored the life of every human being in real-world settings, people are doomed to failures because life is not a bed of roses. However, both a hero and an ordinary individual have the self-determination and resiliency to stand up and fight back. Determination is the essence of increasing your chances of being successful in a particular thing or achieving a particular goal, and it can also help you to stay

motivated and continue striving towards the one thing you want to achieve (Winn, 2017). Additionally, the beauty of a hero's journey is the courage to continue the struggles they are facing but they managed to finish the battles. For that reason, when he returns home from his journey he has been transformed in some way from his journey. In a landscape characterized by relentless evolution, identifying the catalysts for change is crucial for any organization or leader aiming to undertake a transformative journey (Mortl, 2024).

Moreover, complexity leadership theory recognizes the dynamic interactions that take place within organizations as they change, create innovation, and evolve with a focus on complex relationships and network interaction rather than controlling, standardizing, and autocracy (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009).

CONCLUSION

In account of the results of the study, the following conclusion was drawn: the struggle felt by a hero's journey in the separation phase is the struggle of leaving his homeland for a mission. In the initiation phase, the hero is struggling with his journey because needed to fight and win despite all circumstances, also he needs to fight to preserve his role as a hero, in the same reason the hero is needed to fight to defend the homeland from the adversaries and to fight in the name of love. On the other hand, in the return phase, the hero struggles to fight for survival and be declared the fittest hero in the journey.

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