

Demonization and sanctification of indigenous feminine roles in the 16th century Philippines

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Abstract

The indigenous feminine roles were hidden from the trappings of the early Spanish chroniclers in the 16th century since their worldviews and background prompted them to write in favor of the Spanish aims of colonization and evangelization. In the process, they despised the importance of women's status which the author described as demonization. To bring back indigenous women's honor and dignity, the method of reconstruction is employed to retrieve their narratives that showcase their value be it in the rituals of the maganito, leadership and social functions in the community, and their place in the family and clan. It is in this practice of restoration that the author come up with his notion of sanctification which is considered holy when their integrity is respected and acknowledged. The study employs demythologization technique which emanates from the dialectical enlightenment designed by the critical theory pioneered by Adorno and Horkheimer. The research is limited to the indigenous feminine roles in the 16th-century Philippines. This is qualitative research that analyzes primary sources be it written, visual or artifact materials. The findings of the study shall enrich United Nation Sustainable Development Goal 5 that tackles gender equality and empowerment since any attempts to promote holistic growth should anchor to the respect of human dignity and take into account various dimensions including the stories of the marginalized.

Keywords: indigenous feminine role, demythologization, demonization, 16th century Philippines, dialectic of enlightenment

Background of the Study

The rich and abundant primary sources about indigenous feminine roles in the 16th century Philippines were covered by a different packaging done by Spanish chroniclers. This was brought about by their worldviews as Catholic missionaries or ethnographers writing under the tutelage of the Royal Court. Scholars need to decipher their stories that were concealed by the historiographers' prejudice concerning the female status, and their socio-political and cultural sphere of influence since the inclination was to put premium on evangelization processes dominated by the men of God. There is a need to uncover them to reveal the culture surrounding the value of women since in today's times striving for holistic growth means incorporating various individuals in society including the promotion of equality regardless of gender, religion, economic status or race.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) was launched in 2015 that embodies the global partnership for the well-being of the peoples of the earth. It aims to end poverty, protect the environment, fight and reduce inequality and injustice by 2030. The common battle cry among United Nation members is to integrate the UNSDG's 17 goals listed: Goal 1 (G1): No poverty; G2: Zero Hunger; G3: Good Health and well-being; G4: quality education; G5: gender equality; G6: clean water and sanitation; G7: affordable and clean energy; G8: decent work and economic growth; G9: industry, innovation and infrastructure; G10: reduced inequalities; G11: sustainable cities and communities; G12: responsible consumption and production; G13: climate action; G14: life below water; G15: life on land; G16: justice, peace and strong institutions, and G17: partnerships for the goals (UNDP, 2015).

UNSDG's Goal 5 speaks about gender equality and empowerment. When one makes a careful critical examination, the sense of history/herstory about how gender divide took place and the context from where it developed are essential to advance the issue, and address concerns that strengthen the dignity of women, and their place in society. Women issues and their history/herstory are vital in the fulfillment of related goals such as G10: which is reduced inequalities, G16: justice, peace and strong institutions and G17: partnerships for the goals. Thus, it becomes imperative to reconstruct the feminine role in the 16th century Philippines to "sanctify" or bring back its core essence that defined their worth, and provide a model of their significant contribution that will be a source of pride in today's generation. However, it is also essential to unpack the demonization process

how they were pushed to the margins or to annihilation to understand the root cause of the gaps that were encountered.

It is important to underscore that the concepts of female autonomy and leadership were foreign in the 16th century in the many parts of the globe. As Alvarado puts it, it was like a bombshell for European invaders who had patriarchal monotheism to witness women having political authority in their indigenous tribes (Alvarado, 2015:4). In such milieu, it was the tendency of the Christian crusaders to demonize the feminine role be it their functions in the rituals, tribal positions, household chores, and day to day events that their influences were important. But scholarships about them should also undergo a “*sanctification*” (reconstruction) where there is a recovery of their power to be partners for change and progress. The dictum to be fully human as popularized by the Benedictine tradition would be in full realization in such context.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the perception of the Spanish chroniclers on the 16th century feminine roles of the *babaylans* and their socio-cultural roles;
2. To analyze how demonization process became a form of ideological tool to justify the marginalization of women and *babaylans* in a given milieu, and how colonial narratives be demythologized that can reconstruct and sanctify their honor and dignity;
3. To promote historical narratives that can strengthen UN SGD 5, and how it can be a tool in achieving gender-equality as one of the sustainable development goals.

Significance of the Study

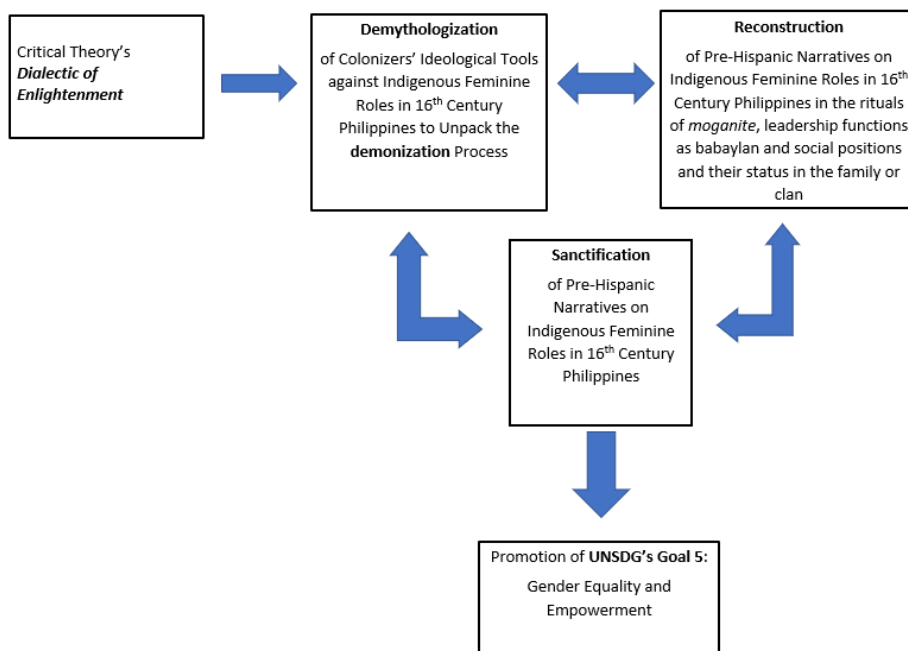
This discourse about feminine roles in the 16th century can strengthen the bid to fortify positions of gender equality that is not only a fundamental human right but a basic foundation for sustaining a peaceful and flourishing world. The paper articulates the *babaylan*'s feminine roles in the 16th century which punctuates how women were empowered during that time. However, this has been clouded and hidden by the ideological tools used by the Spanish colonizers and ethnographers by demonizing them

and conditioning the minds of the people by discrediting their actions as evil and destructive. This has imprinted in the way people look at the babaylan that has relegated their significance to the periphery and the margins. The original feminine roles have been despised burying the spirit of wholeness and harmony it brings to society. An identification of how it was demonized can bring a dialectic of enlightenment which is a liberation from the ways of thinking that enslave us. Through sanctification by means of bringing back the lost feminine glory to the consciousness of many, one can proceed to aligning its impact to the UN SDG 5 gender equality which is essential in achieving sustainable development. This research represents a usable history that has a powerful narrative that can change the way realities are viewed. From it, it raised awareness and liberate the consciousness from all forms of marginalization, discrimination and oppression.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1.

The Dynamics of Demonization and Sanctification of the Indigenous Feminine Roles in the 16th Century Philippines



In this research, critical theory's *dialectic of enlightenment* serves as the metanarrative, the umbrella concept where its process of *demythologization* is utilized to unpack the colonizers' ideological apparatus to demonize indigenous feminine roles in the 16th century Philippines. As a philosophical concept, critical theory aims to marry theory and practice to release from all forms of control and domination. This also refers to a major strand of thought from the Frankfurt School particularly focusing on the works of Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas. What binds them together is to "*dispel the illusion of ideology*" in order to achieve a free and self-determining society. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947). This springs from the Marxist theory of the ideology of illusion, Hegel's dialectics where for every reality there is an opposing reality, and Freud's analysis of the individual delusions. Marx ideology of illusion presents the false consciousness where individuals are misaligned to reality and their inability to identify exploitation and oppression (Eyerman, 1981, pp.43-56). This is shown in Marx's dialectical materialism where economics serves as a determinant factor or infrastructure in one's place in society, while this is supported by ideology and politics which he called superstructure to maintain the existing status quo where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Ideology is one of the legitimizing factors which include religion, education and media. They condition the way people think and view society. Critical theory is also influenced by Sigmund Freud's analysis of individual delusion. In Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* he examined how middle class Viennese women's delusion that a prince will come and marry them (Freud, 1927).

One of the salient concepts of critical theory is the identification and description of patterns that blinded people to the realities of domination be it in the nature of a person within his or her ways of thinking or subjugation of one individual over the others. This is caused by the fear of not able to know, and idolizing systems like advances in technology without questioning the effects of its progress. Adorno and Horkheimer coined the term *dialectic of enlightenment* to liberate individuals from ways of thinking that enslave them. In his language, one of the ways to overcome such condition is the process of demythologization where a person believes his or her capacity and eliminates the fear of the unknown. *Dialectical enlightenment* is the mythical fear radicalized. It means to re-interpret structures that oppress one's consciousness and release them from the ordeal of being manipulated, thereby attaining insight and illumination. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002: 2)

To achieve that enlightenment where freedom is attained from the shackles of domination, the paper proceeds to the reconstruction of narratives to reveal women's sphere of influence from the practices in the ritual of *maganito*, leadership functions as *babaylan* and social positions, and their status in the family or clan. The process of retrieval of their valuable roles can lead to their *sanctification*, a term by the author of this study to refer to the honor and dignity of women restored and given due importance. From here lies the promotion of UNSDG's goal 5 which is gender equality and empowerment.

Review of Related Literature

There are a lot of scholarships and articles about women's rights and liberation and the various marginalization they experienced be it on the international stage, national, community or domestic level. There is a plethora of ideological spectrums that exposed them from different feminist groups to religious institutions and civil society. But the number downsized when the topic points to the relationship between indigenous women and the colonizers in a certain time and place. There is a dearth of resources especially how pre-hispanic Filipino feminine role was demonized by the Spanish colonizers and evangelizers during the Spanish contact in the 16th century.

On the global scale, Alvarado's *Sacred Feminine in North America: Indigenous Matriarchy, Christianity and Power* (2015) made an analysis on the leadership function of tribal indigenous women collided with Christianity's patriarchal monotheism. It shows the power dynamics of the invaders who targeted them as threats perpetrating colonial violence and eliminating them by recreating new social order that supports the agenda of spreading Christendom. It also shows the tenacity of women in North America that despite the "bad blood" between them and the invaders they find ways and means to prevent their communities from extermination.

Brunette (2015) in his *Indigenous Women's Resilience and Resistance to Historical Oppression: A Case Example from the United States* presents how women were considered part of "evil forces" be it in political and spiritual realm. It narrates its historical roots highlighting the Graeco-Roman culture where wives were considered husband's property. This stand was perpetuated in the religious ideologies of St. Augustine and

Martin Luther who emphasized the male dominance over female (Brunette, 2015:4).

Wolfstone's *Remembering Matricultures: Historiography of Subjugated Culture* (2018) made a survey on the "mother-centered societies on maternal values of care-taking and meeting needs" (p.5), and emphasized the intimate relationship of humans, land and culture. Matriculture did not assume reversing the order by men being subordinated. Rather, it underscores governance by consensus and socially egalitarian practices. This work uncovers various historiographies that subjugated indigenous matricultures, the processes of erasing knowledge about them were done, and how indigenous resurgence movement took place. The knowledge construction against matricultures were tactical moves to erase the prominent position of women in society, and relegated them to periphery or annihilation.

Zwissler's *In the Study of the Witch, Shadows and the Academic Study of Religions* (2018) featured gendered traces of magic and religion in the early modern European Christianity. Heresy was personified in the woman's face along with associating them to be witches to maintain the status quo of men's dominance in society, and rationalize the dichotomist Christian dogmas where it offers better path than the ways of indigenous practices.

In the Philippine context, prominent studies about indigenous feminine role can be seen in Cullamar's *Babaylanism in Negros: 1896-1907* (1986) where it described its origin and movement during the last years of Spanish rule and early American Period, and how it was being revitalized. Later scholars go back to this opus when researching *babaylanism* since this work offers a glimpse of how women manifested power in the rituals, and extended such leadership in social affairs. Cullamar's work gives details on the spheres of influence of the *babaylan*, and the extent of its possible power within the context of the period. It contains extensive primary sources that can be a good lead in any further study of the subject.

Virgilio Enriquez's *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience* (1994) taps indigenous viewpoint that paved way for the spread of indigenous approaches in Psychology in the Philippines. This movement became relevant in interdisciplinary approaches where it puts premium on traditional Filipino beliefs and practices, thereby giving worth to the Filipino identity.

Back From the Crocodile's Belly: Philippine Babaylan Studies and the Struggle for Indigenous Memory (2015) which was edited by Mendoza and Strobel compiled essays about the search for indigenization and the struggles that come along with it including attempts at decolonizing narratives that have developed from foreign lenses. This collection claims to be inspired by Enriquez's discourses in his *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (1994) that tried to indigenize approaches to understanding Filipino consciousness including the traditional beliefs and practices of the *babaylan*.

An extensive study that is directly related to this research is Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Spanish Rule* (1988) which critically studies the translation, conversion and power-relations embedded in the colonization and evangelization processes in the 16th century Spanish contact with the Tagalog people. Through the history of communication between the invaders and the invaded, Rafael seeks to sketch the situations in how colonial regimes emerged and developed, and how the pre-Hispanic natives resisted through accommodation but strategically maintained their own worldviews. There were the power dynamics of how to condition the consciousness of the inhabitants and their manner of reception. The ideological tools employed by the Spaniards are interesting areas to decipher the demonization processes. Religious language and the ways they were communicated through translation and conversion supported the agenda of colonization where tribal people were compelled to face the novel forces that eventually responsible for shaping new social order in Tagalog colonial society.

When the discussion proceeds to how studies about *babaylan* can contribute to today's quest for sustainable development related to gender equality, there are narratives that can be of help. Strobel (2013) in her book, *Babaylan and the Call of the Indigenous* develops a critique that there are still primary *babaylans* in the indigenous communities in the country. For those who were Christianized, they appeared in many forms from being *beatas* in the Spanish period to today's Eucharistic lectors and commentators to religious sisters, catechists and heads of mandated organizations. The ones who did not embrace Christianity continued to be *neo-babaylans* in the new era.

Hudtohan (2017) explores in his article *Moral Beauty* how the spirituality of *babaylans* created wholeness mentioning Miclat-Cacayan's (2005) encounters in Mindanao and their worship tradition through dances. His work also cited how the *babaylan* was Christianized and assuming new

roles in the Church citing the arguments in the articles of Vergara (2011), Veneracion (1998), Salazar (1999) and Cruz (2002).

The previous studies reveal narratives that attempt to decolonize approaches in gender-based works. The literature review presents the related studies and identifies the existing gap. Given such context, there are still spaces where there is a need to examine how to empower women and bring back their rightful worth using the deconstruction and reconstruction processes that identifies the demonization and sanctification trajectories. From here one can expose the rich heritage of feminine roles in the 16th century. It fortifies the past glory that can be a source of pride how to navigate UN SDG 5 gender equality using these narratives as basis in its claim for progress.

Methodology

This research employs demythologization technique which emanates from the dialectical enlightenment designed by the critical theory pioneered by Adorno and Horkheimer. This model of analysis highlights how ideology serves as pivotal driver to keep the subservience and submission of people of a given social milieu. There are ways to condition the mind of the people. In Adorno's framework, these are ideological tools which can be the constant bombardment using media, arts and cultural practices, individuals can easily be controlled.

Adorno and Horkheimer's critical theory interpretative analysis of society shall be the philosophical underpinnings to enrich the meaning of demonization and "sanctification" of indigenous Filipino feminine roles in the 16th century Philippines. This shall be integrated to the use of IPOO or Input-Process-Output-Outcome systems approach in order to classify and process the research data and align them to the direction of a usable history whose projected outcome is utilized to sustain the development of indigenous Filipino women and the neo-*babaylans* of the 21st century.

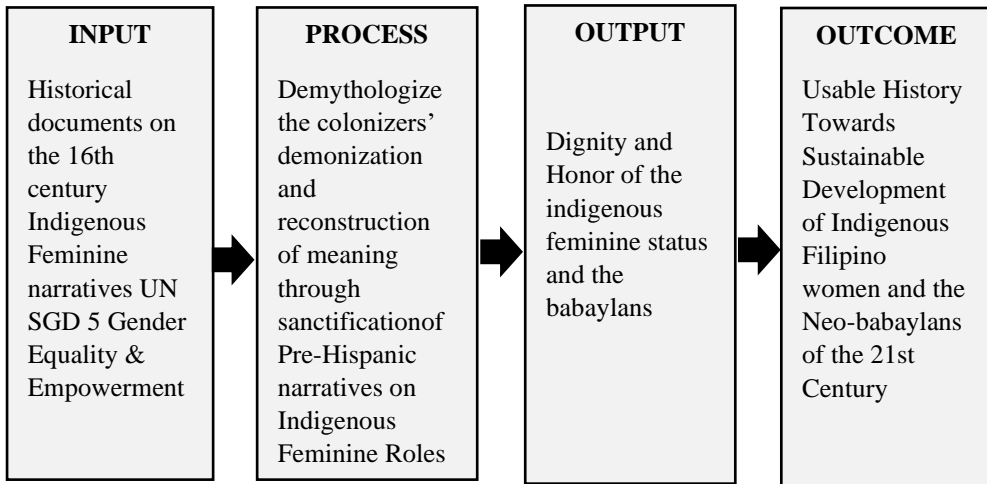
Figure 2.*Integrating IPOO Process*

Figure 2 shows the IPOO process where Adorno and Horkheimer's critical interpretative discourses are interweaved.

The input comprises the historical documents on the 16th century indigenous feminine narratives and the UN SGD 5 Gender Equality and Empowerment. The process is using the demythologization technique in order to unravel the colonizers' demonization of the 16th century practices of the babaylans, and reconstruct their power and influence to restore and “*sanctify*” their honor and integrity. The study employs the term sanctification to refer to the process of bringing the dignity of women and the *babaylans* (who were also men dressed like women) by scrutinizing their practices that give them a special status and equality to men. Dignity is sacred and the core sanctuary of every human being. The details of this process are shown in Figure 2 that demonstrates the conceptual framework of the paper. The output is strengthening the dignity and honor of the feminine status and the *babaylans*, while the outcome is a usable history towards sustainable development of indigenous Filipino women and the neo-*babaylans* of the 21st Century

The research employs historical method using archival, library and e-library work. It examines primary sources, namely Pigafetta's Voyage Around the World (1522), Loarca's Relacion de las Islas Filipinas (1582), Plasencia's Customs of the Tagalogs (1589), the Boxer Codex (1593),

Chirino's *Relacion de las islas Filipinas* (1602), Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609), Colin's *Labor Evangelica* (1663), Alcina's *History of the Bisayans* (1668), San Agustin's *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas* (1698) and other written, visual and artifact sources that can expose indigenous feminine roles at that time. Given the context of their writings, there is a need to demythologize their narratives given the medieval mindset and the objectives of these chroniclers who were working under the tutelage of the King of Spain and the universal Church. An examination of their historical milieu is an important approach in aid to demythologization process of the study.

Demonization and sanctification of the feminine role in the 16th century are also examined by identifying which practices were discredited and miscalculated by the Spanish chroniclers in the formulations of their descriptions which were based contextually based how it fitted Spain's objectives of evangelization and colonization. A restoration of its original practice by removing the negative description, while maintaining the core experience can bring back the sanctity of their story as social and spiritual leaders. From there, it becomes a basis and a source in propelling the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment as bannered by UNSDG.

From the primary sources, visual and artifacts, the indigenous feminine role in the 16th century Philippines are deciphered. The dialectic of enlightenment through demythologization shall unravel the demonization process, and through reconstruction the narratives that point to feminine roles and their value are revealed which can lead to the restoration of its honor and dignity termed by the author of this study as *sanctification*.

The paper is limited to the indigenous feminine roles in the 16th century Philippines. The indigenous feminine roles were hidden from the trappings of the early Spanish chroniclers in the 16th century since their worldviews and background prompted them to write in favor of the Spanish aims of colonization and evangelization.

Results and Discussion

The Demonization of the Indigenous Feminine Roles in 16th Century Philippines

Within the backdrop of Spanish colonization and Christian evangelization, Spanish missionaries interpreted the beliefs and practices of early Filipinos using medieval historiography and Christian tenets that led to describing them as evil and works of the demons. When natives were converted by force, they were instructed that salvation is through Christ and His kingdom of God. Missionaries instilled the ideology of "hell" that once you go against the teachings of the Church one's soul will be consumed by eternal fire.

The indigenous feminine roles are manifested in the *maganito* through the leadership of the priestesses in the rituals, the position of women in the family, and how their rights are asserted and respected in the community.

Maganito is a religious ceremony that includes prayers, dances, songs and feasting to appease *anitos* through offerings usually of a slayed pig. In Pigafetta's account, *maganito* is a ritual dancing "round the pig which is bound on the ground" (1522:31).

In the eyes of the natives, there is a distance between the Supreme God they called *Bathala*, and a way to reach the Almighty was difficult. (Boxer Codex, 1593: 89; Plasencia, 1589: 186). The *anitos* are intermediaries who are in the form of spirits of deceased ancestors, nymphs or *diwatas* and nature-spirits who dwell in trees, rocks, bodies of water or animals. In the language of Loarca:

"they adore the divinity called Bathala, the lord of all or Creator. His ministers who are deities of certain special office are called anitos. Some of them were for the fields, some for those who journey by sea, some for those who went to war and some for diseases. The Bathala was a great Lord and no one can speak to him. He lived in the sky; but the anito who was such a nature that he came down here to talk to men, was to Bathala as a minister and interceded for them. (Loarca, 1582: 173)

The pre-hispanic islanders need the *anitos* to communicate to *Bathala* their petitions and prayers for certain purposes be it for good harvest during planting season, healing a sick person, marriage, childbirth, funeral rites or even first menstruation. (Boxer Codex, 1593: 15-2, 85-87)

The women or indios dressed as women officiate the *maganitos*. These priestesses were called *babaylans* or *baylanes* in the Visayas or among the *Pintados* (Loarca, 1582: 129, 133) while the Tagalogs referred them as *catalonans* (Boxer Codex, 1593: 81; Plasencia, 1589: 190).

The *babaylans* or *catalonans* were demonized by the missionaries by calling them sodomites. They were also called *bayog* or *bayoquin* described to be male priests who wear women's dress. The Spanish religious chroniclers stated that "*they are so effeminate that one who did not know them would believe that they were women.*" They were discredited to be immoral stating their "*impotence for reproductive act and marrying other males and sleep with them as if they were man and wife who have carnal knowledge of each other*". (Boxer Codex, 1593: 81).

Spanish missionaries further painted a negative image of the *babaylans* or *catalonans* creating a myth story that they are "*sorcerers performing witchcraft or deceits for the purpose of emptying the pockets of the ignorant people.*" They claimed that *maganito* is a hoax. It is a drinking feast exploited by the *babaylan* or *catalonan* where during the ritual they invoke the *anitos* to come and be possessed or become a medium to know the results of their petitions like the sick person will recover, thus the drinking continues in jubilation. (Boxer Codex, 1593: 83). In their narratives, Spanish chroniclers claimed that the natives were fooled by the demands of the priestesses for them to do sacrifices for the *anitos*. The "*invocations lasted until the demon entered his body, when the catalonan fell into a swoon, foaming at the mouth. The Indians sang, drank, and feasted until the catalonan came to himself, and told them the answer that the anito had given to him.*" If this is meant for healing a sick person, they need to pay like a ransom for well-being like offering to the priestess their golden chains and ornaments. (Loarca, 1582: 173).

In Plasencia's narratives (1589), the *babaylans* or *catalonans* will never run out of excuses and explanations to deceive the people. They were associated with witchcraft and infernal ministers working for the demon. They are the highest in authority having the label: priest or priestess of the devil. To diminish their influence, they were invalidated by the ethnographers stating that they were associated with evil creatures,

sorcerers or witchcraft. They were believed to be the next to control them. These include the *manganguay*, *manyisalat*, *mancocolam*, *hocloban*, *silagan*, *magtatangal*, *osuang*, *mangagayoma*, *pangatahojan* and *bayoquin*. (pp. 192-196).

Table 1.

Various Indigenous Characters in the Pre-Hispanic Philippines

<i>Indigenous Characters in the Pre-Hispanic Philippines</i>	<i>Description/Functions</i>
<i>Manganguay</i>	Witches who deceived by pretending to heal the sick. They used charms to inflict sickness, and capable of causing death.
<i>Manyisalat</i>	Almost same function with <i>manganguay</i> specializing on applying maladies to lover who abandon their partner. They can even cause to prevent them to have intercourse outside their spouses.
<i>Mancocolam</i>	Capable of giving illness or death through its rituals. It can emit fire from himself in the night that cannot be extinguished.
<i>Hocloban</i>	A witch like the <i>manganguay</i> who can destroy or kill and heal if he or she desires by simply saluting or raising their hands.
<i>Silagan</i>	A witch whose favorite are those wearing white, and interested to eat the person's liver.
<i>Magtatangal</i>	A creature that shows in the night whose body and head are split and victimized people by eating their flesh.
<i>Osuang</i>	A creature like <i>magtatangal</i> who can also fly and love to eat human flesh seen in most parts of the Visayas.
<i>Mangagayoma</i>	They made charms out of concocted herbs combined with stones and wood to attract the person they loved and deceive him or her.
<i>Pangatahoja</i>	A soothsayer who can predict the future
<i>Bayoquin</i> .	They are described as man inclined to be a woman and were sodomites.

(Plasencia: 1589: 192-196)

The above shows various indigenous characters and how they were demonized by the Spanish writers. Some of these were created out of myths in order to disrepute the authority and leadership roles of the *babaylans* and *catalonans*.

Witches and witchcraft beliefs and practices are usually attributed to women and they are the target for such persecutions degrading their status to the associated to the evil ones most especially during the medieval period. In her article entitled, *From Circe to Clinton: Why Powerful Women Are Casts as Witches?*” Miller (2018) demonstrated how women in various epochs were put to shame and policing them when they show superior capabilities, knowledge and skills. To invalidate their capacity means to put them in parallel status with witches which is a close term for whore. Using the language of Adorno and Horkheimer, this is demonizing them to destroy their credibility and make others afraid to follow their courageous steps and not challenge the status quo anymore. Clearly the leadership status of the feminine role in the *maganito* rituals challenged Spanish ministers of the Church in matters that tackle the spiritual realm. The medieval concept of spiritual over the material was so important for missionaries since it laid the foundation of evangelization and colonization of the islands.

The Spanish colonial worldview carries the Roman tradition of women to be properties of men. For them, trans genders and gay relationships are perversions given that this is outside the norms of the Church, and a direct violation of the natural law and the Christian laws. When they arrived in the Philippines they witnessed a different reality including how women and trans genders becoming powerful in the *maganito* rituals since they are the only ones who can communicate to the *anitos*. It was necessary for them to demonize the beliefs and practices because they are obstacles to the agenda of Christianization of the islands and the *babaylans* and *catalonans* became their rivals in the altar, and a threat to their position and authority.

The colonizers were also surprised how women were treated to be almost equal to men in pre-hispanic society reflected in their myth stories and household chores, and day to day activities. Unlike the biblical story of Adam and Eve, the woman was taken out of the rib of the man (Gen 2: 22) showing the patriarchal dominance of man over the woman. However, in the myth stories of the Visayans or *Pintados* it showed the equality of man and woman where they came from two nodes of the bamboo which the bird had split open (Boxer Codex, 1593: 29). Unlike the western concept on the power of man to the woman, there was nothing of parallel accounts shown even of early missionaries. Thus to combat that image, the missionaries demonized it by insisting the said biblical account through visual arts be in the ceiling of the church, stained glass, paintings, sculptures or illuminated manuscripts.

Sanctification: Bringing Back Indigenous Feminine Dignity and Honor

To bring back indigenous women's honor and dignity, the method of reconstruction is employed to retrieve their narratives that showcase their value be it in the rituals of the *maganito*, leadership and social functions in the community, and their place in the family and clan. It is in this practice of restoration that the author come up with his notion of sanctification where it is considered holy when their integrity is respected and acknowledged.

As mentioned above, the research reveals the leadership influence of the feminine role in the pre-Hispanic Philippines. It extends its concept not just to biological female but also to transvestites who were functioning as leaders by virtue of being priestesses (*babaylans* or *catalonans*) (Loarca, 1582: 129, 133; Boxer Codex, 1593: 81; Plasencia, 1589: 190). Their power rested in being the presider of the *maganito* who can be a medium to the spirits, and relay to people their message. Being priestess, they are healers too. These important functions affirmed their worth and value how they can bridge the people and the *anitos*, the physical and the spiritual world. It affirmed their social privileges and status being regarded by the community to have special gifts and talents.

In the *maganito*, life is celebrated in its fertility ritual. This is performed during first menstruation, marriage ceremony and during planting season. This is meant to produce, and the main work of the feminine role in such context is to facilitate the *anitos* to intercede to *Bathala* that the community can have more yield and harvest. Menstruation and marriage ceremony embodied the affirmation of women's privileges. The first menstruation signified the beginning of an abundance. In marriage proposal, the woman should be assured of being taken care of. Thus a dowry is asked through gifts and money representing how valuable the woman is. (Loarca, 1582:173).

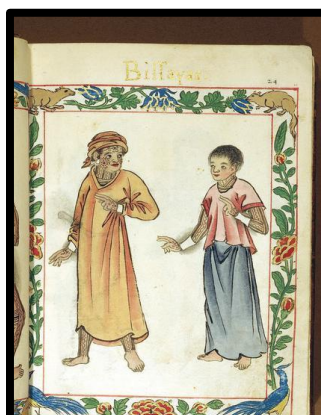
In the early Filipinos' beliefs on cosmic divinities, there is a complementarity and supplementary enrichment of male and female gods in terms of their functions to maintain harmony in the world and nature. This is a complete contrast to the Western worldview in the dynamics of subordination where feminine roles are under the masculine authority (Piscos, 2019: 9-13). For instance, *Ikapati* a female goddess whose typology is land cultivation was considered to be the kindest and most understanding deity helping people in agriculture. She is an icon of the fertility of harvest adored by natives because of her benevolence in providing prosperity and food. *Mapulon*, a male deity whose typology is season married *Ikapati*

where they had an offspring the goddess of lost things, *Anagolay* (Piscos, 2019: 10; originally taken from San Buenaventura, 1613: 361). The concept of man and woman is certainly not subordination among early Filipinos. It is on union and mutuality (Mananzan, 1988). This explains why it was acceptable for them to have a hermaphrodite god by the name of *Lakapati*, a major fertility deity to whom farmers do the *maganito* and sacrifices (Piscos, 2019:10).

Artifacts show evidences reveal how women were regarded with honor and privileged to wear elegant dress with jewelries that placed them in high esteem. (Boxer Codex, 1593: 13; also Morga, 1609: 118). Among the *Pintados*, men have tattoos to signify their courage to defend the community. But women can have body paintings too in their arms to show their beauty that complements the strength of the man.

Figure 3.

Artifacts



Tattoos for women are shown in the arms only to show grace, beauty and power (Boxer Codex, 1593: 51)
(Boxer Codex, 1593)



Women jewelries and ornaments in early period
<https://www.pinterest.ph/pin/763500943047883036/>

Figure 4.

Penis Ring, Boxer Codex, 1593



To show their power in their domestic life at home, women can demand to men what to wear to satisfy their sexual need shown in the penis ring artifact.

Conclusion***Usable History through the Restoration of Indigenous Women's Dignity and Rights Towards Sustainable Development***

The findings of the study revealed that Spanish colonizers demonized the indigenous feminine roles during their contact with the natives in the 16th century. They discredited *babaylan's* position in the community because it posed a threat to their being spiritual leaders and influence. The dynamics were consistent in their evangelization processes that pushed them to the margins. Spaniards carried the western style of treating women to be subservient to men. Thus the usual privileges of their status having complementary character to men in bringing wholeness to the community was discredited and disgraced.

The research gleaned on Adorno and Horkheimer's dialectic of enlightenment demythologized and reconstructed those feminine characteristics that bring wholeness to the community and its people. These include their capacity to be spiritual leaders in the *maganito*, and healers along with their social privileges where they were placed in high esteem by

men in their capacity to give life, and put order and smooth integration in the family and the tribe. The paper unravels the women and *babaylan's* sphere of influence that has the core component of inclusiveness necessary for any drive to sustainable development.

The outcome of this paper is the usable history which can be a tool in achieving gender equality and empowerment. This is because the research reveals the sense of historical rootedness of how feminine roles played key functions in the achievement of well-being for the life of people in the community. Unlike the Westerners' model of women to be properties or lower than men, early inhabitants of the islands set into high esteem the status of women to be valuable and worthy of respect since they have unique qualities that defined the balance of nature. Before Spaniards arrived, it was not their issue of who was more powerful based on gender. Rather, there was complementarity that served as a fundamental basis to any form of women empowerment program that today's generation should undertake.

There are still women priestess and spiritual leaders today in a number of tribal groups in the islands. They continued the spirituality of the *babaylan* to achieve wholeness (Hudtohan, 2017). They are catalysts for service in the community. When we push for women empowerment, the concept of wholeness rather than fragmentation becomes the core component. It is in such context that UNSDG 5 goal which is gender equality can propel sustainable development.

Recommendation

It is highly recommended to dig deeper into the oral narratives, songs and dances how these carried the influence of women in Philippine society before the coming of the colonizers. In dance, the rituals are made alive again to new generation, and embody the soul of who we are, the unique Filipino blend of smooth-interpersonal relationship that uphold respect for honor and dignity regardless of social status, race, religion or gender.

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