

Portrait of a Bontoc Woman in Selected Literary Texts

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Abstract

On the theory that Bontoc myths were composed of male priests and elders, this paper explored and examined how Bontoc folklore represented women and exposed how power relations were gendered in traditional Bontoc society. Using Elaine Showalter's models of feminist criticism such as biological, psychoanalytic, linguistic, and cultural as the tools for analyses, this paper uncovered patriarchal ideologies implied in folktales and songs and revealed how male dominance was inscribed in traditional literary texts. Through the biological model, it emphasizes the physical aspects of a woman. Various body parts were effectively dismembered, and the woman's identity was her face, her language, her shiny skin, and her body was seen as a "womb" for sperm insemination. On the cultural model, the woman was associated with gardening, which is prevalent in Bontoc folklore and culture, further defining gender roles in the Bontoc community. Gardening and hunting as gender roles were commonly found in the selected stories of this paper. The psychoanalytic model portrayed the traditional Bontoc woman as the recluse, the caged bird, the rejected lover, and the rebel. The emerging portrait of the contemporary Bontoc woman has crossed some boundaries and begun to participate in the public sphere even though their bodies are women. Above all, the contemporary Bontoc woman reveals a woman traversing between the private space of women and the public space of men. However, in the process, she has to fight and struggle to gain more freedom in an invincible patriarchal society and gain more access to the public sphere.

Keywords: biological model, cultural model, feminism, psychological model, Bontoc folklore

Introduction

Literary art was once a dominant realm of male authors and composers. Among oral cultures, myth-making was generally the domain of traditional priests or male elders since they were the chanters and leading participants in traditional religious rituals. The construction and narration of myths were done by male elders who utilized myths to indoctrinate young lads to mold them into the roles they will occupy in their future lives. In the process of narrating, they created women characters in the image of the woman that they can control and manipulate. Male authors and mythmakers showed that male characters' attitudes towards women were considered oppressive, exploitative, and degrading. Some feminist critics explained the reason for such attitude; that the female "self" is a cultural idea promulgated by male authors because, in reality, men fear the power of women.

In most of their narratives, what was explicit was a widespread negative stereotyping of women. Common among the images of women in male-created stories were: the gullible

Eve in the Bible, the seductive and immoral prostitute, the greedy, worldly materialistic woman, and most often the creator of evil represented by a witch or stepmother. Sometimes she was a dainty princess, but she was always put in a situation of distress and helplessness, and thus, she needed a knight in shining armor to rescue her.

The most notable observation by feminist critics is that frequently male writers write according to how their culture perceives women in general. Society determines specific characteristics for a woman to fit into a particular cultural setup. Thus, women's significance in society is only how much man determines for a woman.

The way society views women depend on the period of history in which a particular literary piece was written. Western literature in the ancient world had been affected by the Judeo-Christian teaching about women. For instance, the history of women in ancient Christianity, as explained by King (1998), has changed dramatically since there are already women historians in the field. They brought new questions and methods that sought evidence of women's participation in society. In the past, Mary Magdalene was painted as an adulteress and a repentant whore in Western Christianity; however, with new insights and discoveries of new texts, it shows that she was indeed an influential figure in the early Christian movement which promoted women's leadership (King, 1998). In Jewish society, mother figures were highly regarded in the Old Testament. Women like Esther, Ruth, and Deborah were represented as brave heroines. At the same time, women were also portrayed as evil, such as Jezebel and Delilah, who were characterized as wily, seductive, and deceitful. Moving on to medieval times, women were portrayed as saints capable of totally rejecting their sexuality, hence the perfect embodiment of purity resulting in the proliferation of women saints. However, it also created an extreme attitude of viewing sex as evil.

In Philippine literature, particularly the Cordilleras, the literary experiences of the Mountain people were not reduced to writing. Instead, the people transmitted their literature orally, and through their collective memory, they were able to preserve their cultural heritage. Oral literature in the region is divided into ritual and non-ritual literature. Ritual literature refers to songs, chants, and narratives that can only be performed in a religious context, i.e., in the observance of certain rituals or ceremonies in which divine or supernatural intervention in human affairs is invoked. Non-ritual literature consists of secular forms which can be performed on any occasion, during festivities or moments of leisure, to express communal sentiments or personal yearnings.

Bontok literature is rich in ritual and non-ritual literature, classified as prose and poetry. Poetry is in *ayyoweng* (lyrics songs), lullabies, epics, riddles, and *togtokhon* (proverbs). Prose consists of the *og-okhod* (myths, legends, and folktales). People have songs and narratives for different occasions. Literary themes are based on the people's experiences, which could be on labor, romance, politics, and gender. In a way, oral literature describes the local history and worldview of the Bontok people.

This paper then aimed to explore and examine how Bontok oral literature portrays women in songs and folktales. Feminism as a tool for analyzing and criticizing literary texts explains how a particular culture shapes a patriarchal society through its oral and written literatures. Most of the related literatures of this paper are written by feminist critics who helped a lot in this study to expose the patriarchal ideology of the Bontok people. Elaine Showalter's models of feminist criticism were used as a guide in the delineation and outline

of this paper. It thereby concentrated on the biological, psychoanalytic, and cultural models of feminist criticism.

Feminism

Feminism is difficult to define because of the many different kinds of feminism today. However, in line with this paper, I applied the definition of feminism from the following author's perspectives. Feminism can be defined as changing and critiquing male supremacy (Ucheh, 2013). Gilbert and Gubar (1984) also mentioned feminism as a literary tool that seeks to translate and explain all the hidden questions and answers that have always shaded the connections between textuality and sexuality, genre and gender, psychosexual identity, and cultural authority. This is ideological because a text is being criticized for the images, tropes, and stereotypes of women created in the discourse or text. It likewise considers omissions and misconceptions about women. Moreover, it studies women as a sign in the semiotic system of a particular society.

According to Green (2007), feminism as a theory “takes gender seriously as a social organizing process, and, within the context of patriarchal societies, seeks to identify how women are subordinated to men and how women can be emancipated from this subordination.” Feminisms are useful for identifying the ways that patriarchy is not only a problem for women, but for men as well. According to Johnson (2005) as cited from St. Denis (2007), “patriarchy isn’t simply about relationships between men and women. It encompasses an entire world organized around control domination and competition” (46).

Cole (2013) noted that feminism is all about equality not just for women but for all people regardless of gender, sexuality, race, culture, religion, ability, class, nationality, or age. The social system men dominate has been guided by the gendered worldviews of their perspectives and interests, thus creating an unequal system.

Mills (1995) mentioned that "most feminists hold a belief that women as a group are treated oppressively and differently from men and that they are subject to personal and institutional discrimination. Feminists also believe that society is organized so that it works, in general, to the benefit of men rather than women; that is, that it is patriarchal." Mills' information does not imply that all men benefit equally from what the society is structured today because the society also persecutes men in different points, or rather Mill's evidence does not imply that all men take part in the extension of the system because men have the right to decide to oppose the oppression of other groups. However, it does not suggest a common dissimilarity in how men and women are treated in society as a whole, and others can observe them as gendered beings.

The Feminist Theory

The struggle for gender equality has been considered feminism around the world. Applying the feminist theory, it firmly states that men and women should be politically, economically, and socially equal. To determine whether Bontoc women are victims of patriarchy due to literature, the researcher anchored the theoretical framework of this study on the literary theory of feminism. Feminism believes that our culture is patriarchal, structured to cater to the interests of men.

Consequently, there is an imbalance in the power relations between men and women in a given culture. This is supported, reflected, and challenged by literary texts. Feminism focuses on the absence of women from discourse and meaningful spaces opened by women's discourse. In particular, literature is viewed as an instrument of socialization that emphasizes its social function rather than studying literature merely for its artistic or entertainment value. Hence, this paper will closely examine literary texts (folktales and songs) in the theory that these texts will reveal society's worldview regarding women. Moreover, feminism theory will uncover how literary texts contribute to the marginalization of women in society.

In support of the feminist theory mentioned, this paper expands to Showalter's feminist theory to analyze the selected Bontok literary texts explaining how the Bontok culture shapes the patriarchal society through its oral and written literature. Showalter is one of the most studied in the canon of feminist literary criticism. According to her, as Guerin et al. (2010) mentioned, there are four models of feminist criticism: biological, psychoanalytic, linguistic, and cultural. However, this study will only focus on the three models, biological, psychoanalytic, and cultural.

To put the research analysis in context, it is necessary to define Showalter's models used in this paper from which the texts are analyzed and conclusions are drawn.

The Biological Model

A two-fold concept of gender, which recognizes the link between body and mind, nature and culture, is most helpful in this respect. The biological model sets the woman's body as dangerous and essentializes the definition of a woman. In "The Centerfold Syndrome" by Brookes (1995), he disagrees with the glorification and objectification of women's bodies in movies, television, advertisements, and literature. Such promotes unreal images of women, distorts physical reality, creates an obsession with visual and mental stimulation, and makes trivial all other natural features of a healthy psychosexual relationship between a man and a woman. Literary texts characterize women merely as sex objects, depersonalize, perpetuate anatomical lies, and idealize untrue fantasies about women's bodies and sexuality.

In the same line of thought, Guerin et al. (2010) discussed the marginality of women's status in a male-dominated society which indicates the awful power of women using Marvel's poem "To His Coy Mistress" as his model. The persona's flattery, as well as his verbal attacks in the poem, belies his deep-seated fear of his mistress. To the persona, the feminine is enclosed, unattainable, tomblike, and womblike. Despite the speaker's sweet proposition done in a courtly love tradition, the woman continues to resist and refuse him giving crude imagery of a woman exercising her power through a continued refusal of him. Thus, the poem describes the feminine as a negative state. Because she does not assent, she is absent from the poem; her final decision is not stated. The poem is about power and sex, giving the reader a picture of people who enjoy sex for pleasure and are not above making jokes and having fun arguing about it.

The Psychoanalytic Model

Cited from Capelli (2017), Elaine Showalter, in *The Female Malady* (1985), analyzed the ways that "mental health norms are gendered masculine and the damage that patriarchal

society inflicts on the female mind and body; however, these arguments avoid an intersectional understanding of identity, one that would include race and sexual practice as identity markers that have a tremendous influence on the pathologizing of women's behavior." Showalter added that "psychoanalysis, for its part, hardened into a discourse that devalued women—despite the presence of women in its ranks," diagnosing this lack of change as a continuation of the patriarchal pattern of silencing dissident women. This type of Showalter's model led Guerin et al. (1992) to use Hamlet, a literary masterpiece by William Shakespeare, proving that the play depicted a clash of genders and women's roles generated their dualities. What had been acted upon by the forces with which Hamlet contends was a woman's body, his mother's, and he, in turn, had been acted upon by that body.

Cultural Model

In the indigenous oral tradition literature among the Igorots, the sexual role has apparent, distinct features that usually reflect the roles and outlooks of every culture (Fagsao, 2019). The Bontok woman is a product of social construction. Hence, the cultural model was constructive in analyzing the portrait of the Bontok woman in folktales and songs. The cultural model places feminist concerns in social contexts. The female psyche is a construction of cultural forces and acknowledges class, race, nationality, and historical differences. Although there are differences, the cultural model offers a collective experience that unites women over time and space. The following related studies describe women in a different social context.

In the Philippine context, Facura's (1992) study dealt with the feminist issues in the selected short stories of Kerima Polotan portraying the images of Filipino women in their traditional roles as wife, mother, housekeeper, and dutiful daughter. The study included how women changed, like being aggressive, ambitious, sophisticated, and learned to fight and asserted their rights no matter what it cost.

De Guzman's (1995) thesis analyzed women from Sionil's stories featured as martyrs, victims, angry or bitter transitioned women and healers who had different roles in a definite class. Politics, clans, and men discriminate against women. In her study, these women had different social roles as pleasure-seekers or prostitutes, revolutionary and even weak-willed, submissive, and dependent.

In Orendain's dissertation (1996), she investigated the gender-role stereotyping and non-stereotyping of women found in the children's narratives, the relations between these women and the men, and between these women and other women in the narratives. In her study, the narratives for the children on the Cordillera, women automatically and stereotypically assume roles within the family context and other roles outside of the family and village life determined by certain conditions like geographical proximity and the passage of time choice, and circumstances.

Results and Discussion

Portrait of the Bontok Woman through the Lens of a Biological Model

The physical traits of a woman play a significant role in selecting a prospective wife. This was explicitly and implicitly revealed in the folktales and songs, *The Lomawig Myth*, *The Pregnant Foot*, *The Man Who Married a Star*, and *Magmagkit Na'y Tet-ewa (A true*

lady). The attraction between men and women, which starts with the physical appearance, is natural among human beings. When Lomawig begins to search for a wife, the foremost criterion in his choice of a wife is the woman's external appearance. He decides not to marry in one place upon seeing that the women have lice as they are often seen scratching their heads. He is not attracted to the woman in one town because their language sounds harsh and strange to his ear. In another barangay, the women cut their hair short. However, as he came to Bontoc, he saw two sisters toiling in the rice field. The elder one spends the time swimming in the Chico River while the younger one remains on the rice field, laboring despite the heat of the mid-day sun. He chooses Fukhan, the younger and prettier sister, and eventually marries her. *Magmagkit Na'y Tet-ewa* likewise praises the Bontoc maiden by describing her shiny skin like the flaming resin wood and pretty face. Emphasis was on the physical aspects of women rather than portraying women holistically. Various body parts are effectively dismembered, and the woman's identity is her face, language, and shiny skin. The women in these narratives are portrayed in a negative state. They are absent in the stories and the songs since they are mere passive subjects who do not make decisions. In other words, they play a minor role and have limited space because they are dominated and eclipsed by the male characters in the story. In fact, in *Chacha and Kedyam's* myth, the almost absence of a woman character is evident. The wife of Kedyam only appeared in three sentences where she questioned the breaking of the vats (heirloom) about being used as weapons. After that incident, nothing was heard of her. Tragically, the story is a peace-making myth where women play an important role, yet women are ignored or unrecognized in this peace-making myth. Moreover, these folktales and songs offer a portrayal of women and men where the roles they play sharply indicate the limited powers of women.

The *Pregnant Foot* narrates a woman's rejection because her face resembles a dog's. The spiritual qualities of Fukhan are not being esteemed by Akhofan but well recognized and appreciated by her baby boy, Mar-on. When Fukhan takes off her mask, displaying her naturally pretty face, Akhofan comes to love her. This clearly indicates that the physical aspects are critical among Bontok men searching for a prospective spouse. Size, shape, and harmony of body parts are more important than a woman's human qualities. Society often sets standards for beauty and is blamed for prioritizing physical beauty, as pictured in the tale, *The Pregnant Foot*. The people are ridiculing Mar-on, the son of Fukhan, for having an ugly mother. We blame the men for ogling at women, yet society gives the stamp of approval for men to ogle at women.

Another myth that distinctly shows the objectification of women in Bontoc folktales is *The Man Who married a Star*. In this narrative, the central male character (the hunter) becomes an observer of women. The main character who married the star maiden has come upon two maidens taking a bath in the carabao's wallow. He secretly hides in the bushes and observes them. He now becomes the observer and the two maidens as the object of his observation. Later, he chooses the younger one because she is more slender and prettier. In the same folktale, the maiden is characterized as an animal of prey, and the man takes on the character of a hunter; and hence a predator. The woman is physically weak and helpless, with no choice but to succumb to the power and strength of man. The tale describes how the man hides the star maiden's clothes and wings to control her. She is left with no choice but to give in to the man's marriage proposal. The story later narrates that the man returns her skirt but

not her wings. Wings are symbols of freedom and for the hunter to steal and hide the maiden's wings means curtail her most valued possession, her freedom. In a patriarchal society, women become the captured prey and caged in a dull domestic life. To further amplify this, Brooks (1995) asserts that:

Women become objects of men as men become the objectifiers. Our culture has granted men the right and privilege of looking at women. Women have been expected to accept the role of stimulating men's visual interest with their bodies becoming objects that can be lined up, compared, and rated. The process is distinctly one-way, with women's bodies highlighted and male observers remaining in the shadows or anonymous in a crowd.

Moreover, in male hunters, men compete to get the most sex tokens to prove their masculinity. Consequently, women's bodies become objectified and treated as prized trophies. This patriarchal mentality becomes dangerous when women are depicted as prey to be hunted and trophies to be won. Just like trophies, once they are won, women become properties of men and are there for display, a permanent physical symbol of man's accomplishment. However, the star-maiden did not remain as the permanent physical symbol of the hunter's accomplishment because she discovered her lost wings and regained her freedom and original immortal status. Therefore, women cannot be metaphors for trophies nor hunted prey. Nowadays, there is growing discontent among women, and they no longer like to play the role of passive subjects or live in private spaces (domesticity) throughout their lives.

Finally, the Bontok woman's portrait is the closed casket image in the biological approach. In the *Lumawig myth*, Lumawig put Fukhan, his wife, and their child to sleep in a casket and let it sail down the Chico River towards the north. It stopped at Tinglayan, one of the towns of the province of Kalinga. The sight of a casket in the river created a commotion because no one could open it. Then came a widower who tried to hack it open through an ax but ceased hacking when he heard the voice of Fukhan. The significant image in this myth was the woman being encased in a casket and to gain access to the woman is to attack or assault the casket where she was. Caskets symbolize death or closure, which means women are often cold and unattainable. To attain a woman's body is to attack her; a man can take her against her will through violence. Said interpretation can be valid if one equates a woman's body to a closed casket as portrayed in the Lumawig myth. This image of encasing a woman in a casket symbolizing death moreover foreshadows the impending death of Fukhan in the latter part of the tale. Although the widower married Fukhan, the original act and motive of putting Fukhan and his children in a casket were all controlled by the god-man, Lumawig. Note that Lumawig is the central character in the story. Thus, he is still in control of the following events in the narrative. Because he is part immortal, he can know and plan the following sequence. Thus, one can conclude that even the entry of the widower, trying to hack open the casket, is part of Lumawig's plot of the story. Moreover, the sailing of the casket going down the Chico River is a cultural symbol of death, according to the people of Bontoc.

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, all the portrayals of women in Bontok folktales enunciate the marginalized status of women in Bontoc traditional society. If the woman is found to be infertile, she is worthless, with no personality and identity. It is of public knowledge that in the Bontoc's unwritten code, a husband may divorce his wife if she cannot

bear children. Often, the woman stands to lose, materially and emotionally, in such a situation. Relative to this, women's infertility as a ground for divorce is a famous unwritten law among the people in the Cordilleras. In the short story, *The Wedding Dance*, by Amador T. Daguio, Awiyao was forced to divorce his wife Lumnay because she could not give him a child. It was not their voluntary decision as a couple to separate, but per the unwritten law and culture, Lumnay must leave her husband and return to her parent's house.

From these framed pictures drawn by local storytellers, one can deduct the continuous image of women's exploitation, discrimination, and marginalization in Bontoc society. Women remain dismembered and are perceived as mere body parts like a pretty face, a shapely waist and legs, and a "womb" for sperm insemination.

Portrait of the Bontok Woman through the Lens of a Cultural Model

Feminist literary criticism leads to a thorough examination of gender roles in society. This is not about the biological anatomy of males and females but how a given culture perceives men and women's roles and status and how they are socially constructed. The following discussions expose how gender roles become a site of struggle for power relations between men and women based on the character portrayals of the selected folktales and songs.

The gender role found in *The Man Who Married a Star* is that hunting is an occupation for men, and women take the role of gardeners. This was evidenced by the fact that it was in the garden that the star-maiden found her hidden wings. This was likewise a repeated portrait in the Lumawig Myth, where Lumawig found the two sisters gathering black beans in the rice field at Kadchog. *Magmaakit Ka'y Tet-ewa*, the song, pictures an industrious, energetic lady in the garden gathering *camote* (yam) leaves and *lagwey* (black bean shoots). In an interview with *ina* (mother/aunt) Fakokad, a woman elder of barangay Samoki, Bontoc, she explained that in the traditional Bontoc culture, if a young lady fancies a young man, the young lady initiates the courtship by bringing a few bundles of *camote* leaves to the house of the young man. This act initiates the courtship stage between the young lady and the young man.

Sometimes, the young lady gives her services free of charge by working at the young man's family *uma* (garden). These images of women associated with gardening are prevalent in Bontoc folklore and culture and further defines gender roles in the Bontoc community. This gender role of women as gardeners is also a common observation in anthropological studies. Anthropology commonly observes that the identification of women with gardening and males' identification with hunting is ancient and widespread. In her article, Reuther (2004) explains that the key element for identifying women with nature and gardening lies in the woman's reproductive role as child-bearer, making women the primary producer and maintenance worker. Women's work is usually associated with child care, food production, preparation, clothing production, and other basic needs in everyday life. These patterns vary among cross-cultures, but generally, males situate themselves in more prestigious jobs and demand bursts of energy such as hunting large animals, war, and the plowing of fields, allowing them more space for leisure. This is the basic foundation of patriarchy and its monopoly of culture. By reinforcing male privileges of leisure, they develop a superior attitude towards male activities and consider women's activities inferior.

Gardening and hunting as gender roles are significant points of analysis in the star-maiden story from a feminist point of view. This is because women are victims of hunters concerning the male subculture of headhunting. Women and children are easy prey targets because they cannot fight back a headhunter's ax in a tribal war during an ambush, mainly alone in the *uma* or rice field. This situation usually happens when a tribe needs human heads as a sacrifice in agricultural rituals to ensure a bountiful harvest. Bontoc narratives in the past tell many stories where women were hunted and sacrificed in agricultural rituals. This shows the clear connection between headhunting, female fertility, and the fertility of rice plants. It also expresses the relationship between gender politics, poetics of violence, and violence against women.

However, the star-maiden story is not in the context of religious sacrifice but the setting of courtship and marriage. This tale gives us a view of how gender relations in courtship and marriage are socially constructed. The usual practice in Bontoc is to marry within (endogamous) the tribe. If one marries outside of town, people say that one is a "surplus" good which means that no one is attracted to them; hence, they have to go out of town to find a life partner. The hunter in the story deviates from this cultural norm and marries a maiden (extra-terrestrial) outside his tribe. Likewise, his manner of securing a bride is coercive and deceptive:

"Where are my skirt and wings?" demanded the woman.

"Ah, maybe you are my good omen. I came to hunt and found you. Let's get married."

Left with no choice, the woman answered, "Let's just do that." She knew that without her wings, she could not fly back to the sky. So the man gave back her skirt but hid her wings at the sugar cane field, among the stalks of a sugar cane plant.

This part of the story betrays the underlying and enduring violence from the days of the headhunt. The *faangan* (backyard garden) was used by the man to hide the woman's wings. This again is a strong suggestion that there is a strong association between the women's reproductive role and the fertility of plants. The captive's role is not simply to be a homemaker but to produce many children. In Bontoc's traditional worldview and as gathered by a conversational interview with Ina'y Fakokad, she stated that a woman's worth is measured by the number of offspring she brings out into the world.

The second significant point in the relationship of women's fertility to headhunting is the hunter's mode of acquiring a wife. He lies in wait for his unsuspecting victim, marries her by force, and domesticates her. As a result, the woman's status is far less mundane than her original heavenly position.

Finally, the act of hiding her wings symbolizes the flaying off the skin of the woman. In symbolic interpretation, the act of stealing and hiding the wings and flying off the skin means the total removal of the wife's identity and power to ensure her bondage. In the woman's nakedness (wingless), she is coerced to submit to the man's marriage proposal, and the captive wife must belong to her husband entirely. This unflattering portrait of males in Bontoc society brings to the surface the undercurrents and far less harmonious gender relations between men and women in Bontoc traditional culture.

Portrait of the Bontok Woman through the Lens of a Psychoanalytical Model

Folktales are good sources to explore the female psyche through Carl Jung's archetypes in feminist psychoanalysis. The literary archetypes found among the female characters in the selected literary texts for this study were: 1) the recluse, 2) the caged bird, 3) the rejected lover, and 4) the rebel.

The woman in recluse was Fukhan, the wife of Lumawig. It was an imposed seclusion by her husband. Before Lumawig placed his wife and children in the casket, he instructed her never to dance in public at the *ato* (meeting place of male elders). However, when she was at Tinglayan, and the people were dancing at the *ato*, she wanted to participate in public dancing. However, she remembered Lumawig's order telling her never to dance in public. To assuage her desire to dance, she started to dance inside. Once she started dancing, the earth moved and swayed. This amazed the people and forced her to come out and dance at the *ato*. Three days after, she became sick and eventually died as her punishment for disobeying a patriarchal command. In a patriarchal society, there are expected norms of femininity for women to obey, which men's needs have primarily determined. A woman can become confused about her identity in a culture that prescribes specific roles, especially if men reject her natural being. Patriarchy does not allow women to move from a private sphere to a public space. Lumawig's wife wanted to express herself through dancing in public, but because of an irrational imposition given by the husband, she failed to develop herself into a holistic human being. As a result, she was not allowed to express herself in public. In other words, she has no voice in the public sphere. When a woman's role is limited to one or two roles, she feels cheated, frustrated, and angry because a part of her struggles is to express herself.

The caged bird archetype finds its representation in the character of the star-maiden. The star-maiden was entrapped into a marriage because of exigency, not through her own making or decision but from a man's duplicity. She became immobile because her husband hid her wings and thereby limiting her space of movement. She had become a caged bird. Cages are symbols of barriers to freedom. Women in Bontoc are often constrained by traditional social expectations of what women can and cannot do. Sometimes cages are in a forced marriage where women are forced to marry a man of their parent's choice. It was common in Bontoc society that women belonging to the traditional aristocracy were usually the victims of forced and early marriages in the traditional norm. Failure to obey parents' will means the disinheritance of the disobedient child from his/her parents.

Psychologists say that humans tend to live in a paradox of the need for freedom and independence, yet they still desire security and safety. Therefore, there is a need to accept certain limitations, but one must learn not to live inside a cage of stifling conventions. To some degree, everyone is a caged bird, but one must learn to adopt different roles and wear different clothes for various occasions to live in society effectively.

Romantic rejection is a universal human experience. Rejected women lovers are portrayed through the characters of Khalim in *Toptokawan* and Fookan in the tale, *The Pregnant Foot*. Khalim is driven away by her husband because she lost a piece of precious jewelry, a valuable family heirloom, while her lover rejects Fookan because she has an ugly face. In both narratives, their sons compensated the two women, whom they nurtured in secret. Their sons were their secret weapons of revenge. In Greek mythology, in the epic *Jason and the Argonauts*, a version of Evslin (2012), Medea, the central female character,

lover of Jason, and priestess, killed her children in revenge to Jason for abandoning her. However, Fookan and Khalim, as described in the story, did not kill their sons to revenge but instead loved and nurtured them. Bontok women are portrayed as strong despite rejection from husbands or lovers. Culturally, the people of Bontoc have strong kinship ties and love for children. This is readily seen in instances where a woman would get pregnant out of wedlock, and the man who impregnated her refuses to marry her. In many instances, the woman keeps her baby, nurtures her baby until he/she grows up. Then comes the reversal of fortunes, where the illegitimate child grows up and becomes somebody in society. This time the putative father likes to acknowledge his son/daughter, the mother's revenge on the husband or lover who once rejected her. Khalim and Fookan rose above rejection and did not pine for the lost husband nor took revenge by killing. Quietly they accepted their life's situations, ceased fantasizing for an ideal lover but moved on with life, and in the long run, their husbands came to love them.

Tanabata's wife is an archetype of a rebel. Tanabata's wife is a Bontok woman whose name is Fas-ang which means to cross over. Years ago, in the traditional Bontok, a woman was not allowed to adventure to a distant place or marry a foreigner. However, Fas-ang, rebelled against all traditional rules and left Bontoc to find a job at La Trinidad. While in a strange place, she married a Japanese national. She had crossed over to another culture by living with a foreigner and learned to plant Japanese vegetables. She even learned to go out to watch movies. Fas-ang portrayed a woman who desired to explore and experiment with new things. She was able to break through old identities and roles and build a new life for herself.

The overall portrait of the traditional Bontok woman as framed in the selected folktales and songs is a woman dominated by patriarchal culture. Closed casket, wingless star-maiden, the man in control of a woman, rejected wife, woman as prey for a hunter, among others, are some of the archetypal images prevalent in Bontoc folklore. Men's control over women's sexuality, labor, and mobility results in gender inequality, with women and men having differential access to economic resources, political power, and social value.

Emerging Portrait of the Bontok Woman in Contemporary Bontoc Society

In contemporary Bontoc society, a Bontok woman is often identified through her native woven costume and jewelry. Thus people see pictures in museums, magazines, and mass media of a Bontok woman donned in colorful native woven apparel with beads twined around her hair and captioned as the "Bontok woman" or "Igorota." Thus the Bontok woman is often seen as a framed relic picture of the past. Popularly etched in the mentality of most people is that she is a static being who never moved on from its traditional portrait despite the dynamic entry of colonization, education, globalization, and modern technology.

The emerging portrait of the contemporary Bontok woman as portrayed in a literary text is best framed in the short story "*Tanabata's Wife*" authored by Sinai Hamada, one of the illustrious writers of the Cordillera. The title itself reveals that the story revolves around a woman character whose role is a wife. Tanabata's wife is a sturdy young woman who comes from Bontoc, and her name is Fas-ang. Fas-ang is a Bontoc term that means "cross-over." Hence, her name is very significant in the developing portrait of the Bontok woman because it can imply a mobile transformation or crossing over of Bontok women and overcoming gender limitations and boundaries imposed by traditional patriarchy. However, Fas-ang is

likewise seen as a representative of the ambivalent woman of today who traverses between traditional and contemporary roles. Fas-ang and three other Bontok women originally planned to work in the Kennon road construction, but Fas-ang deviated from the plan and decided to stay with Tanabata. With Tanabata, Fas-ang remained as a gardener and housekeeper, the same traditional roles assigned to women.

Bontok women have crossed over some boundaries through a biological approach and begun participating in the public sphere even though their bodies are women. That is, Bontok women have come to realize that a woman's body is not a mere subject for man's objectification but can become a site for political struggle.

On gender roles, Bontok women are slowly coming out from their traditional roles as housekeepers and gardeners; they even leave home and venture into another occupation known to be a man's job. For example, in the short story "*Tanabata's Wife*," Fas-ang and three other women set out to Baguio to work in the construction of Kennon Road. Working on the railroad is known as a man's job, yet these Bontok women are crossing over a boundary imposed by traditional gender roles to work on road construction that demands a man's herculean strength.

Moreover, working on road construction goes against the traditional idea of femininity. Nevertheless, Brownmiller (1987), in her essay, "Femininity" says that, "Femininity, in essence, is romantic sentiment, a nostalgic tradition of imposed limitations. Although at the beginning of history, the woman was defined by her physical dependency, her inability for reasons, and her reproductive biology, she triumphs over the forces of nature that were the tests of masculine strength and power. Today, she reflects both an economic and emotional dependency that is still considered "natural" romantic and attractive." Femininity does not lie in physical dependency or vulnerability but a value system of equality, understanding, cooperation, and interdependence between men and women.

With the advent of western education, Christianity, globalization, and modernity, Bontok women have crossed over and ventured on to other areas of employment rather than play traditional roles as mere housewives and gardeners. The contemporary portrait of the Bontok woman traverses between the private space confined to women and the public space traditionally known as male territory. Women, according to patriarchy, are not allowed in the public space, but as commonly observed, some Bontok women are now invading these "public spaces of men." Bontok women claim that they now have a voice in the community's decision-making processes like peace negotiations since they can at present be voted as a member of the Council of Elders.

Another interesting point of analysis is the marriage of Fas-ang to a foreigner. As aforementioned in this paper, the traditional Bontok's preference for a marriage partner is to marry within the tribe. However, in the short story, *Tanabata's Wife*, Fas-ang, marries a Japanese national, deviating from the traditional norm. She had crossed traditional boundary lines and married an alien. However, one reads in the story how Tanabata molds his wife according to his cultural standard of a Japanese woman. Although he gives his wife more freedom and space by allowing her to watch movies at night and on Sundays, she goes to sell vegetables in the public market, the roles she plays as Tanabata's wife were the same traditional and stereotyped roles, she had left behind in Bontoc; a housekeeper and a gardener.

The emerging portrait of the Bontok woman, through psychoanalysis, reveals a somewhat ambivalent woman cautiously exploring the public space of men. Although she thinks she is now free from visible patriarchal cages, the modern cages of women are invisible. Feminists argue that representations in the media culture are unfair. Television programs are manipulated to legitimize the marginalized roles of women. Hence, society unconsciously submits to the patriarchal framework constructs that create women's subject positions.

There is still a long way to go in the gradual metamorphosis of the picture of the contemporary Bontok woman. She may have crossed over some barriers, such as cultural, political, and education problems, but she has yet to hurdle the problem of patriarchy, locally and internationally. At present, her portrait reveals a woman traversing between the private space of women and the public space of men. Nevertheless, in the process, she has to fight and struggle to gain more freedom in an invincible patriarchal society and to have more expanded access in the public sphere.

Conclusion

As reflected on selected literary texts, the traditional portrait of the Bontok revealed the following framed pictures through the lenses of the biological, cultural, and psychoanalytical models. Biologically, the traditional Bontok woman was perceived as a dismembered human being, considered as mere body parts and particularly valued for her reproductive organ, the womb. From the lenses of the cultural model, the Bontok woman was portrayed as the gardener and nurturer. Because of her close relationship with nature, they must carry the burden of child-rearing, housekeeping, and gardening. Lastly, through the camera of a psychoanalytical model, the traditional Bontok woman was characterized as a recluse, a rebel, the rejected wife, and the caged bird.

The emerging portrait of the Bontok woman was best represented in character Fas-ang, the wife of Tanabata. She symbolizes the Bontok woman of today who struggles to cross over cultural, biological, and psychological boundaries and limitations imposed by a patriarchal society. Moreover, psychoanalytically, the emerging portrait of the Bontok woman seemed a woman freed from her cage at the outset. However, there are still vestiges of patriarchal attitudes which imprisons both a man and a woman to gender relations.

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