

# *Urbana at Feliza: A Cultural Analysis of Women Oppression in the Philippines During the Spanish Period*

Francoise Daneen B. Ungab<sup>1\*</sup>, Nekka Marie Oftana<sup>2</sup>, Mona Fe Aruta<sup>3</sup>, Lito L. Diones<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Undergraduate, Department of Language and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences, Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines

<sup>4</sup>Associate Professor III, Department of Language and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences, Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines

**Abstract:** Literature is viewed as a reflection on culture and society that uses popular ideas from the moment to illustrate and support cultural improvements. Literature is moreover commonly recognized as a trustworthy source for historical and cultural depiction. In order to recognize the ethics and values of Filipino women that were prevalent during the Spanish Period, Modesto de Castro's fictional epistolary book *Urbana at Feliza*, which centers on the various experiences, values, behavior, and attitudes of two sisters during the Spanish Period, fits to such a cultural study. By looking at a few scenes of Modesto de Castro's *Urbana at Feliza*, this paper analyzes the Cultural Values and Ethics of the Philippines that show injustice toward Filipino women during the Spanish Period. The study focuses on the episodes and main characters from the aforementioned epistolary work and is supported by Mead's Symbolic Interactionism Theory and Wollstonecraft's Liberal Feminism Theory. This study employs a qualitative methodology, particularly discourse analysis. The process of acquiring information is also divided into two phases: Phase 1 analyzes the selected episodes, and Phase 2 looks at characters. Modesto de Castro's epistolary and exemplary fictional novel *Urbana at Feliza* contains information on the cultural influences on Filipino women's morals and ethics during the Spanish Period that continue to have an impact on Filipino women today. This information can be found in the study's objective, which is to disseminate the data gathered to support both the main problem and the sub-problems. The results imply that Modesto de Castro's book exposes the cultural standards and ethics that subjected Filipino women to oppression throughout the Spanish Period.

**Keywords:** Cultural, Epistolary, Ethics, Feliza, Filipina, Oppression, Period, Spanish, Urbana, Values.

## 1. Introduction

There is an indisputable interrelatedness among culture, literature, and history respectively (Vural, 2018, p. 9)). For centuries, people felt compelled to express their feelings about the smallest of details concerning incidents that take place in a person's day to day life. The desire to illustrate and identify one's own stance naturally led to the process of recording such occurrences in diverse types as well as through various media such as imaginative literature, which repeatedly proved to be one of the most essential tools for reflecting the reasons of the current events present in society. Hence, literature is perceived

as an introspection of culture and society, depicting folk's concepts and fantasies established through specific time and space frameworks in the most artistic and imaginative way, illustrating and empowering cultural reforms. Furthermore, literature is also frequently regarded as a reliable source for historical and cultural representation (Habbar). As this study attempts to recognize the ethics and values of Filipino women which prevailed during the Spanish Period, the novel *Urbana at Feliza* fits to such a Cultural study as Modesto de Castro's fictional epistolary book revolves around the various experiences, values, behavior, and attitudes of two sisters during the Spanish Period.

*Urbana at Feliza* is a brief exemplary novel written by Modesto de Castro and was first published in 1864. It is a story about sisters who exchange letters about the events of their lives, communicating clear points regarding their belief in terms of the religiously accepted moral truth and behaviors that concern women. The epistolary novel is about the ideology of how women should be, socializing women's values and attitudes at home, school, and church through methods of catechization, sanitization, and sanctification (Reyes, 1999, p. 2 to 4). Therefore, studying this culture-bound fictional novel helps the paper achieve the purpose of the study which is to contribute to the body of facts concerning the distinct culture and identity of Filipino women. Furthermore, the chosen literary piece helps in gathering the variables and factors that distinguish the Cultural Values and Ethics imposed on the Filipinas during the Spanish Period that exhibits oppression, discrimination, and abuse.

Values are cultural ideals of a classified group in which people consider important and are treasured (Macaranas, 2017, p. 1). Values are also what individuals use to determine one's own ethical behavior (Jones, Bartlett). With that being said, values and ethics are crucial as both are concerned in deciding what is good and bad, right and wrong. However, not all values and ethics exhibit universality, thus, another purpose of this study is to gather data to inform the public, especially the Filipinos, of cultural variables and factors that plays part in the oppression, discrimination, and abuse of the women of the

\*Corresponding author: frankie6275263@gmail.com

Philippines during the Spanish Period that exists even in contemporary times. Through utilizing Modesto de Castro's fictional novel titled *Urbana at Feliza*, the study can extract and obtain information of the practiced values and ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period which contains data with regards to women oppression.

## 2. Literature Survey

Literature is one of the crucial instruments used in shaping the world as well as figuring out human encounters, and fostering the norms and values society maintains. Thus, the following literature reviews present below explicates the idea of the utilization of episodes and characters, and how it assists the main problem of the study in extracting the needed information from the novel *Urbana at Feliza* for the analysis of this study.

Evan Gottlieb, a British Literature professor, published an article titled *What is an Epistolary Novel?* at Oregon State University's website. Gottlieb affirms that fictitious works that are composed in the form of letters or different records are alluded to as "epistolary novels." The word epistolary is the descriptor variation of the Latinized Greek word for letter, epistle. This type of writing transcends the novel itself. As novels showed up in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was a predominant practice for writers to integrate letters into their storyline. Letters integrated in the storyline of novels often move the plot and it furnishes readers a valuable chance to hear from the characters in their respective viewpoints, giving authenticity and mental profundity. As epistolary novels express the character's point of view in their day-to-day experiences, analyzing the scenes and lines from the letters of each character help extract the cultural values and ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period.

An article titled *Letters, letter writing and epistolary novels* from the website called British Library, written by Louise Curran, states that letters give an appealing window into the considerations, sentiments, and lives of others since they obscure the limits between the general population and confidential areas. It subsequently corresponds with both home confinement and public activity. Since letters limit the information to a character's day to day experiences, the contents of a letter only focuses on the sentiments, thoughts, observations, etc. However, utilizing the episodic letters of the epistolary novel by Modesto de Castro aids this study in assessing Urbana and Feliza's thoughts and viewpoints of the values and ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period.

Writer Mag website's article titled *Writing epistolary novels in the modern age*, written by Jen Petro-Roy states that despite the fact that writers seldom describe experiences top to bottom in letters and messages, communication in epistolary novels frequently reads as stressed. Subsequently, this type of writing demands authors to secure the letters with an intrinsically incorporated interaction, and many think of it as an ideal strategy to accomplish. It also urges writers to be attentive in integrating the protagonist's feelings into such discourse as well. The characters' interactions of their day-to-day life were carefully stated in the novel, therefore, episodic letters help

extract the values and ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish period as they express their thoughts and observations from their surroundings by describing what they see and observe.

Epistolary novel is the genre of Modesto de Castro's novel titled *Urbana at Feliza*. This type of novel expresses the character's point of view in their day-to-day experiences, giving an appealing window into the considerations, sentiments, and lives of others since they obscure the limits between the general population and confidential areas. In this study, the episodic letters found in the novel are utilized as episodes. As the letters present in the novel provide information to extract the Cultural Values and Ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period, extracting the scenes and lines from the episodic letters help in the development of this study.

A website named Literary Ethics also claims through an article titled *Themes in Literature: Literary Ethics*, published by a writer with a pen name called bookworm, that ethical participation exists in fictional stories too. The article further illustrates how fictional characters make moral judgements based on a specific spectrum with ethical implications. With that being said, numerous philosophical texts concerning morality use minor imaginary events to make a point.

According to Grell Bret's article titled *Character and Character Types in Literature*, published on a website called Study, a person, creature, object or thing depicted as an individual in a story is alluded to as a literary character. Bret also emphasized the point that there should be a character present in every story. Most stories include various characters that interact with one another. The characters' appearance in a certain scenario depict the roles of those wherein the situation of the story develops as they go through the disturbance of the story. Either internal or external factors, the character's experiences shape its identity. *Urbana at Feliza*, the main characters of the novel, interact and share personal experiences through the letters, thus, the utilization of the element character aids in assessing the impacts of the Cultural Values and Ethics to the behaviors and beliefs of Filipino women during the Spanish Period that are present in the utilized novel of this study.

Based on the article published on Enotes titled *What is the importance of characters in a story?*, written by Sheil Johnson and Jason Lulos, People get a glimpse of how other people might react to different situations and conditions through a character's perspective in fictional stories. The story has more impact if people can associate oneself with the characters. Through the circumstances a fictional character encounters, readers can absorb and apply the character's responses and critical thinking methods. With this, readers are grounded and prepared in dealing with circumstances similar to that of fictional characters. Furthermore, it helps readers on when to react and not react to presented situations. Thus, utilizing characters in this study aids in determining the behaviors and beliefs of the characters in the novel that impacts the Cultural Values and Ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period present in the novel *Urbana at Feliza* as fictional characters also deal with circumstances similar to that of reality.

Internal and external factors help in shaping the identity of fictional characters and the circumstances a fictional character encounters can be applied to reality. Thus, comprehending what a character is and its relevance to literature and reality assists the study in obtaining the perspective of the main character's of the novel titled *Urbana at Feliza*. The information extracted from the characters Urbana and Feliza aids the study in identifying the needed Cultural Values and Ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period.

An online article titled *Is Modesto de Castro a Filipino?* posted by the website Roadless traveled store, affirms that Modesto de Castro was a priest, a moralist and a writer who wrote the fictional epistolary novel *Urbana at Feliza*. *Urbana at Feliza* was the only literary work Modesto de Castro ever published. The said novel was all about the practice of good manners and right conduct among adolescents, in nearly all occurrences may it be in private or public places such as gatherings, parties, dances, church, school, etc. Studying the life and background of Modesto de Castro helps in analyzing the contents and illustrations of the aforementioned novel which supports the author's reason for writing. This aids the study when it comes to the analysis of the scenarios present in the novel which depicts cultural factors that affect the values and ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period.

The following studies present below explicates the idea of how Cultural Values and Ethics are extracted, deliberated, and determined through studying behaviors, societal norms, and beliefs of a specific group. Also, it provides a deeper understanding as to how the novel *Urbana at Feliza* contains conditioned Cultural Values and Ethics that affected Filipino Women until contemporary times.

According to Maria Fe Hicana's study titled *Urbana and Felisa: Discourse of Letters of Correspondence*, the novel describes how Filipinos, particularly women, are socialized in accordance with Spanish preferences and standards, making it the quintessential illustration of urbanity and colonial agents. The book has also evolved into a guide on how to conduct oneself in many facets of life. Especially how individuals behave towards each other inside the church, as well as on special occasions and simply walking. Additionally, it served to advance the status of women at the time. Through the use of many conventions, literature can help readers make sense of the complex realities they encounter in their daily lives. Priest Modesto de Castro wrote *Urbana at Feliza* and made no effort to conceal the exhortatory nature of the writing. It seems to have answered the ethical and etiquette-related concerns that the majority of urban Filipinos had. There seemed to be a constant conflict in this novel between the values and behavior of the "taga-bundok"—the barrio and mountain dwellers—and the westernized and urbanized ways of those who resided in the cities and larger towns. Even though it projected an idealized world with urbanized Filipinos, this segment of society nonetheless made its presence known because its exclusion from the idealized world confirmed that it does not belong to Hispanic society. Although this work made numerous attempts to represent life realistically, the concept of behavior reflects one's culture and behavior can be understood by considering

the cultural aspects of a person. It is important to study how the two are related because cultures determine how behavior should be and behavior determines the way of the culture. According to the social norms, the study described the lessons and manners that were adhered to and used prevailing practices in Urbana and Feliza's letter-exchanging methods at the time.

In a study titled, *Women Education in the Colonial Context: The Case of the Philippines* by Tran Xuan Hiep et al, tackle the role of education in women during the colonial period. The study expounded on how the Spanish have been attempting to diminish the status of women in society in the Philippines since the 16th century. Spanish missionaries introduced a new educational system that was based on patriarchal beliefs and required that women be positioned within the confines of family and society in the Philippines. Under the Spanish administration, the Philippine educational system generally had substantial caste, gender, race, and occupation discrimination, with women naturally occupying a very low position. Spanish colonizers and religious orders were active during the Spanish era. Indigenous schooling was swiftly transformed to reflect the European model, which restricted women within a patriarchal structure and prevented them from holding important positions in society. During the Spanish era, the entire archipelago was subject to the official and unified Philippine educational system. Religious groups paved the way for the construction of primary through post-secondary schools. Girls were mostly taught needlework, while boys were primarily trained in agriculture. Between 1863 and 1898, during the period of the Educational Reform, the Spaniards also founded a number of schools in the Philippines for women who wished to pursue higher education. But boys had more options like Logic, Greek, Law, Philosophy, etc. These topics were considered unsuitable to be part of the curriculum for women. This was because of the prevailing view based on the cultural religion during that period that a young woman doesn't need anything else than expertise in church, kids, and religion. The career options available to upper-class women were severely restricted to becoming teachers or nuns in addition to being homemakers and housewives. It was unacceptable for women even from the working class and the peasantry to pursue or look for higher understanding. The promotion and preservation of culture fall within the scope of education. It's vital to comprehend how women fit into society and how cultural norms influence how they are educated. The effectiveness of a culture's educational system for women is crucial to its general well-being. In order to communicate the goals he outlined in the book, the author plays a significant part in his work. This reflects the author's peculiar writing style throughout his work in this regard. Using the letter between two sisters as a mediator will impart a lesson that should be adhered to by those citizens in accordance with the guidelines to be followed, particularly of the church at that time that in the eighteenth century strongly enforced the order of friars. The author is a Filipino priest. The study highlighted the significance of understanding the upbringing of the author in order to understand the goal or purpose of the written work. As the passage embodies the author's mind and the thoughts of the author reflect how the author wants the reader to know.

A study by A. A. Mardon titled *Symbolic Interactionism*, highlights that the micro-processes through which people create shared behaviors, meanings, and identities are highlighted by symbolic interactionism. By doing this, it highlights how contact, human activity, and symbols work as the foundation of social existence. Symbolic interaction emerged in the late 19th century from the American pragmatism intellectual tradition, which was further developed by John Dewey, William James, and Charles S. Peirce. Most significantly, George Herbert Mead served as a link between sociology and the pragmatic tradition. The way people perceive actual surroundings is what symbolic interactionism focuses on. The best way to study people is to observe one's behavior. It is believed that interaction is accomplished through symbols and that communication is a fundamental aspect of the social evolution of people.

According to a study by Bimer Eyayu Enyew and Alemeneh Getaneh Mihrete titled, *Liberal feminism: Assessing its compatibility and applicability in Ethiopia context* feminism is an inclusive, competitive, and frequently diametrically opposed set of social ideas, political movements, and moral philosophies that are primarily inspired by or concerned with the experiences of women, particularly with regard to their social, political, and economic inequities. The movement for and liberation of women is at stake. Women are hurt, oppressed, and subjugated; as a result, women's awareness has changed to see oppression for what it is and to recognize that it is not inevitable or natural and that it is something that can be fought against. Women's oppression is described in feminist theories, along with its causes, effects, and suggested methods of redress. This pays special attention to social context and power structures, and by looking at the actual experiences of women living within them, it provides a technique of thinking that goes beyond the individualism and abstraction that are prevalent in liberalism. Liberal feminism is the most prevalent of the different types of feminism, and it served as the inspiration for other feminist movements. According to this theory, limiting women's and girls' access to civil rights and the distribution of social resources like employment and education leads to gender inequality. The socially constructed patriarchal ideology that upholds gender inequality is the main focus of this situation. The main principles of liberal feminism—autonomy, universal rights, equal citizenship—are rooted in the liberal political thought of the enlightenment. Democracy is defined by an individualistic emphasis on equality. Liberal feminism's primary tenet is that disparities between men and women are not caused by biology, which essentially refers to variations in reproduction. Thus, women ought to enjoy the same rights as males, including equal access to both higher education and the workforce. Liberal feminism, unfortunately, cannot disprove the idea that men and women are fundamentally different from one another. However, to some extent, it succeeds in demonstrating that, despite these differences, women are not inferior to men due to the social and legal barriers that prevent them from achieving success in the public sphere. Liberal feminists were motivated to address the issue through law and education since women's life chances and results were lacking. In the novel, there is a clear distinction between the right and

wrong way for a woman to behave. Studying Liberal Feminism helps to promote an understanding of the discrimination against women during the Spanish period that is still adamant in most part of the contemporary period.

The novel *Urbana at Feliza* is important to study because the beliefs and morals of the story are still present in some aspects of how women are viewed, how culture is greatly influenced by its dominant religion, and how this religion affects Cultural Values and Ethics. The assumption that one's behavior is a reflection of one's culture can be understood by taking a person's cultural characteristics into account. Because behavior determines the way of the culture and culture determines behavior, it is necessary to investigate how the two are related. As values and attitudes have an impact on choices. Culture has a big impact on how ethics are seen, how a person's values provide the groundwork for their unique personalities, and have a direct impact on how people behave. Understanding how culture impacts values is crucial since one's function in society and how culture is seen will have an impact on personal beliefs and values. It serves as the motivating factor for both acceptable and unwanted values and ideas in a culture. Education encompasses the preservation and promotion of culture. Understanding how women integrate into society and how cultural norms affect how education is taught is crucial. For a culture to be striving overall, its educational system for women must be effective. Religious beliefs, tenets, and ideals continue to have a significant impact on human cultures and societies. Religious belief systems highlight the need to live moral lives and also address questions of human nature, identity, and purpose. Given that a society's behaviors, beliefs, and values have the power to affect the entirety, it is crucial to explore how religion affects culture. Religious rituals both influence and are influenced by the culture surrounding them. The study made a point of stressing the need of comprehending the author's upbringing in order to comprehend the aim or purpose of the written work. Because the text is an expression of the author's views, it conveys what the author wants the reader to understand. Observing behavior is the most effective method for studying people. It is thought that communication is a crucial part of how individuals communicate with one another and that the development of human society. The appropriate and wrong ways for a woman to behave are clearly delineated in the book. Studying liberal feminism aids in fostering knowledge of the persistent gender inequality that dates back to the Spanish era and persists in the majority of contemporary society.

This study investigates the Cultural Values and Ethics of the Philippines that exhibits oppression towards the Filipino women during the Spanish Period through the selected episodes of Modesto de Castro's *Urbana at Feliza*. Specifically, it focuses on the episodes and the main characters present in the aforementioned epistolary novel.

The study is being supported by Mead's Symbolic Interactionism Theory and Wollstonecraft's Liberal Feminism Theory.

George Herbert Mead believes communication and symbolic interaction constructs introspection, self-perception, and

society. Mead's symbolic-interaction theory illustrates how language is essential to developing the mind, self, and society, which are the vital aspects that help humans develop. Mead stated that humanity will not exist without symbolic interaction and claimed that the most human and humanizing pursuit people can take part in is through communication (Griffin 54).

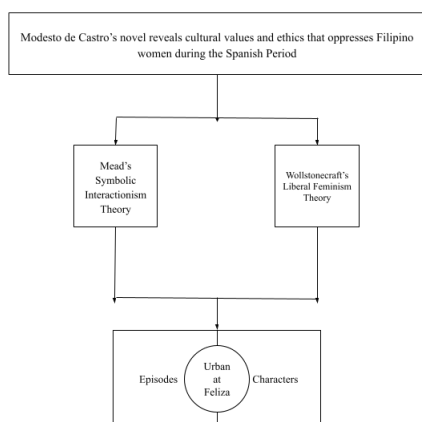


Fig 1. Schematic presentation of the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study

According to Nickerson, Symbolic-Interactionism Theory utilizes factors to assess social acts. The following are; act, the symbol of the act, established meaning towards the symbol, developed views from the established meanings, and lastly, how society communicates the established meanings. Cronk also stated that Mead then describes the act as a social act. It is a collective act involving two or more people participating in an act. The foundation of symbolic interactionism as a social theoretical framework is the idea that social interaction/behavior in daily life is what shapes our social reality. Through the repetitive act of interacting with social groupings as actors, people give their actions/behaviors symbolic and shared significance. The context, interaction, and interpretative aspects of human social interaction can be extensively examined through symbolic interactionism. The meanings of objects and events are imputed or assigned through interpretive processes that are activated during interaction in concrete social situations, and meanings of objects and events are not intrinsic to them. These analytical foci are the result of the orienting observations that human behavior is partially dependent on what the object/act of orientation symbolizes or means.

In this study, Symbolic-Interactionism Theory is utilized to explain how Filipino women's established Cultural Values and Ethics during the Spanish Period affected Filipino women's values and ethics and societal interactions. Thus, the theory is used in identifying the culture-affected behavioral conducts of the main characters of the story.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines Liberal Feminism Theory as a doctrine that stresses the value of freedom which centralizes on problems such as equality in occupation, education, and political rights. A website called Humanists UK then asserts that Mary Wollstonecraft's idea of Liberal Feminism is that civilization is squandering its assets

because it controlled women to participate in the roles of being domestic enslaved people and deprived women of economic independence. As Wollstonecraft pressed that women have the birthright to have equal rights as men, many started studying history and culture to answer arguments such as who established the constrictions of women and what rooted such constrictions. Therefore, this study utilizes Wollstonecraft's Liberal Feminism Theory to discover how culture affected Filipino women's rights and who constricted their freedom during the Spanish Period.

Students, lecturers, and scholars who study the culture, values and ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period will benefit from the findings of this study. Also, literary students and lecturers can develop and extend interest in the cultural factors of the Philippine values and ethics that oppresses and discriminates against Filipino women. This study can also provide a valuable insight of the cultural factors affecting women even during contemporary times through Philippine literature.

#### *Definition of Terms:*

The following words used in this study are being defined operationally.

*Characters* in this study circulate around Urbana and Feliza, the main characters of Modesto de Castro's epistolary novel.

*Cultural Values and Ethics* are the Cultural Values and Ethics present in Modesto de Castro's *Urbana at Feliza* during the Spanish period that oppresses and discriminates against Filipino women during the Spanish period.

*Episodes* refers to the selected 8 letters from Modesto de Castro's epistolary novel titled *Urbana at Feliza* that contains specific scenarios related to the accepted standards imposed for Filipino women during the Spanish Period.

*Filipino Women during Spanish Period* applies to Urbana and Feliza, the main characters of Modesto de Castro's fictional exemplary novel about Filipino women.

*Behavioral Symbol* signifies the negative or positive interpretations which represent the actions or behaviors of Urbana and Feliza according to the cultural customs of the Philippines during the Spanish Period.

*Beliefs* denote Urbana and Feliza's religiously inclined behavioral beliefs.

*Characters* in this study circulate around Urbana and Feliza, the main characters of Modesto de Castro's epistolary novel.

*Cultural Values & Ethics* concerns the moral values and moral conducts present in Modesto de Castro's *Urbana at Feliza* during the Spanish Period which are the root causes of the oppression and discrimination towards Filipino women.

*Society's Developed Views* implies the applied dominant perception of society from the imposed religiously inclined accepted and recognized interpretation towards the action or behaviors portrayed by Urbana and Feliza.

*Episodes* refers to the selected 9 letters from Modesto de Castro's epistolary novel titled *Urbana at Feliza* that contains specific scenarios related to the accepted standards imposed for Filipino women during the Spanish Period.

*Established Meaning* indicates the religiously inclined accepted and recognized interpretation towards the action or

behaviors portrayed by Urbana and Feliza.

*Scenes* apply to the actions or behaviors that portray culturally affected acts/behaviors of Filipino women during the Spanish Period existing in Modesto de Castro's exemplary novel entitled *Urbana at Feliza*.

### 3. Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative method, particularly discourse analysis approach. Qualitative research is used to highlight the diverse ethical standards and cultural values of colonial-era Filipina women. Many conceptualizations exist to advocate qualitative studies. Several, though, are only adaptable when explicating information while still maintaining meaningful configurations. Nevertheless, an article titled *Critical Discourse Analysis | Definition, Guide & Examples* written by Amy Lou and published on the website called Scribbr, claims that one method fit for examining written or spoken language in relation to socio-cultural contexts is discourse analysis. The methodology adopted in this study allows critical observation or investigation as well as a thorough analysis of the work under consideration. It also includes a non-statistical display of data interpretation. This approach allows a thorough investigation of Modesto de Castro's *Urbana at Feliza* and fulfills the goal of the study, which is to share the information acquired to support the main problem as well as the sub-problems. Moreover, to provide credible and reliable reasoning to literary arguments.

The primary data source is Modesto de Castro's *Urbana at Feliza*, with 179 pages, inspected and proofread by the American Philosophical Society. Library, digitized by the Internet Archive, and published to web.archive.org on the 29th of December, 2008.

The first publication of the novel was in 1864, published in Manila, containing 174 pages with a hardcover.

Correspondingly, the secondary sources of data of the study concerning the novel *Urbana at Feliza* are obtained from e-journals, digital books, and online published articles and blogs. Likewise, the information found in this study regarding the Cultural Values and Ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period are acquired from electronic journals, theses, and dissertations.

In order to thoroughly fulfill the objectives of the study, the data gathering procedure follows two phases: Phase 1. Episode, and Phase 2. Character.

#### *Phase 1. Episode:*

Phase 1 focuses on the evaluation of the selected 8 episodes. The episodes are analyzed through Mead's Symbolic-Interactionism Theory. This phase makes use of scenes extracted from the selected 8 episodes of the novel studied. Moreover, the four factors of Symbolic-Interactionism Theory used to assess behavior namely; behavioral symbol, established meaning (religion), and society's developed views (good or bad) are also employed in this phase to aid the study in acquiring the present Cultural Values and Ethics of Filipino women during the Spanish Period. Also, this phase utilizes eight tables.

#### *Phase 2. Character:*

Phase 2 centers on the examination of the beliefs of the character. The beliefs of the character is scrutinized through Wollstonecraft's Liberal Feminism Theory. This phase makes use of the character's beliefs extracted from the aforementioned novel as it further assists the study in acquiring the Cultural Values and Ethics of Filipino women present during the Spanish Period that oppresses and discriminates against women. Two tables are used in this phase.

#### *Data Analysis:*

The qualitative approach particularly the method of discourse analysis is utilized in this study. Thus, the analysis involves a non-numerical presentation of the data gathered from the literary text being evaluated. The method investigates and decrypts the primary and secondary sources to gather the data needed to illustrate the study's main problem and subproblems. Additionally, the data collection process involves Phase 1. Episodes and Phase 2 Characters. The theories used in the two phases of the data collection are Mead's Symbolic-Interactionism Theory and Wollstonecraft's Liberal Feminism Theory. Furthermore, the information gathered in phases 1 and 2 is used as a guide to separate out and decipher the Cultural Values and Ethics of the Filipino women during the Spanish Period.

#### *Ethical Consideration:*

This study is qualitative and employs discourse analysis. Hence, it follows the ethical rules of refraining from fraud and from oversimplifying the study's goals and objectives as a needed byproduct. This study also avoids offering misrepresentations and misleading facts by not presenting the results of the primary data in a biased way. Furthermore, it does not imply or conflict with human or animal rights. Moreover, by correctly citing the works used to give credit where credit is due, this study acknowledges and recognizes the authors of the studies utilized in the associated literature. Furthermore, the main data source for this study is in the public domain, where users can get a copy for free. Thus, it is not against any intellectual property laws, including those pertaining to trademark and copyright infringement.

### 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The portrayal of the Filipino Cultural Values and Ethics in the epistolary novel titled *Urbana at Feliza* depicts the accepted standards of living for the women in the Philippines imposed during the Spanish Period. In this novel, behavioral symbolism is socially constructed through the created interpretations of such behaviors by communicating/educating such behavioral concepts to society, thus creating a socially accepted reality for the women in the Philippines during the Spanish Period.

#### *Episodes:*

The tables below contain data used to determine the Cultural Values and Ethics present in the selected episodes of Modesto de Castro's *Urbana at Feliza*. The cultural values and ethics are therefore analyzed through Mead's Symbolic-Interactionism Theory.

Table 1  
An Analysis of the Episode Paquiquipagcapoua Tauo

Episodes	Scenes	Behavioral Symbol	Established Meaning (Religion)	Society's Developed Views (Good/Bad)	Cultural Values and Ethics
Paquiquipagcapoua Tauo	Urbana waking up early in the morning	Hardworking	It is in woman nature to be industrious	Women should be hardworking if lazy, flawed	Housekeeping
	Urbana thinking about God first thing in the morning	Godly woman, Devoted	Pure-hearted, Godly, Devoted	Women should be devoted to God and exhibit it through praying	Virtuous
	Urbana asking for her parents permission	A good and thoughtful daughter	Deference of a loving daughter	Daughters should show obedience and respect towards parents	Filial Piety
	Urbana's teaching about being able to give something to their parents			It is the parent's pride if their daughter is thoughtful of them	
	Urbana walking slowly and gazing politely in public	Modest woman	Demurity and Gracefulness	A woman should act modest and reserved A woman who is not graceful is flawed	Poised

The first episode titled *Paquiquipagcapoua Tauo* which is a letter from Feliza to Urbana reveals a scene concerning the behavior of a lady waking up early in the morning as evident in the line:

*ang casipagan mo, na pagca guising sa umaga,i, malicsing babangon,*

As observed from the aforementioned line, an inference is immediately given that such a behavior symbolizes or gives the idea that Urbana is indeed hard working. According to the standards set by Catholicism, given that the author of this exemplary novel is a priest, it is in woman nature to carry such a trait as stated in the line:

*ang casipagan at calinisan, ay hiyas nang babaye,*

Society at that time, developed their own views regarding the idea of women being hardworking in nature, quickly assuming that women who do not uphold the standard are straightaway flawed.

*at ang catamara,i, isang capintasan.*

Thus, Filipino families during such a time period educate women in the community to follow the created reality that depicts the right way of how a woman should function in which women should continuously do household chores from morning till night.

*ang gaguin nang babaye, pagcamulat nang mata hangang sa ipiquit ay ualang catapusan,*

This substantiates the pressure a Filipina endures when it comes to having a sense of duty in doing household chores.

Feliza also stated in this letter that God is what comes first to Urbana's mind the moment she wakes up.

*na pagca guising sa umaga,i, malicsing babangon, sasandatahin ang cruz, maniniclahod ca,t, magpupuri sa Dios,*

The religiosity of Urbana in this scene can be surmised as her devotion to God and it is observed through the line

*magpapasalamat at iniadya ca sa madlang pang'anib at pinagcalooban nang buhay na ipaglilingcod sa caniyang camahalan*

Feliza then establishes the meaning of Urbana's faith and conviction as pure-heartedness

*Ngayo,i, naqui-quita cong bucas ang dibdib mo, at natatanao co ang malinis mong puso,*

Although not reckoned in this episode, it is in Christian belief that women should be devoted to God. Feliza then confirms Urbana's devotion to God through the line:

*Dios ang unang bigcas nang labi mo, at palibhasa,i, Dios*

*ang unang isip mo.*

Judging from the statement made by Feliza regarding Urbana, Filipina's indeed during the Spanish Period exhibited such commitment through praying, which implies being virtuous—one of the Cultural Values and Ethics of being a Filipino that is being held on to up until contemporary times.

In the same letter, Feliza talked about Urbana asking for their parent's consent before going to school. Other than that, a recollection of Feliza's memory was also mentioned where Urbana is sharing information to her about being able to make and give something towards their parents

*paghingi nang bendicion bago patungo sa escuela and naaalaala co yaong matouid mong aral na capurihan nang isang anac na babaye, ang maca pagalay sa magulang nang damit na caniyang pinagpagurang hinabi.*

These lines portray the symbol of deference, establishing that such a display is referred to as filial love wherein children show humble submission and respect towards parents through courteousness.

*Nalalugod aco sa capacumbabaan mo at pamimintuho cay ama,t, cay ina, na palaguig gayac ang loob sa pagsunod sa canilang utos,*

In the first letter, it is also mentioned that it is the parent's pride if their daughter is able to offer something towards them.

*capurihan nang isang anac na babaye, ang maca pagalay sa magulang nang damit na caniyang pinagpagurang hinabi.*

This obviously depicts the Filipino Cultural Values and Ethics of filial piety where an awareness of being able to reciprocate the efforts of their parents for raising and nurturing them is present as this is believed in the Filipino community that such an act showcases love and respect.

Additionally, a scenario of Urbana walking slowly and gazing politely while in public is also tackled, and for the Filipino Culture, this display portrays demurity.

*Ang mabining lacad na bucal sa iyo,t, di pinagalaran; ang mahinhing titig nang matá mo na di nag papalibot libot, at ang ti-napunan ay ang linacarang lupa*

This demurity is regarded as gracefulness in the Filipino community and is considered a standard even up until present times. This is because during the Spanish Period, a woman's gracefulness equates to having traits of purity and innocence.

*Aqing natatanao ang cauli uiling anyo mo, ang cabaita,t, cahinhinan na nagniningning sa iyong paglacad at boong caasalan,*

A Filipina with poise is one of the many Cultural Values and Ethics a lady in the Philippines should follow for the reason that not being able to portray such gracefulness depicts being socially impaired.

*ang cahinhinan nang iyong asal na di maquitaan nang cagaslawa,t, catalipandasan*

The third episode titled *Ang Catungculan ng Tauo sa Dios* is Urbana's reply to one of Feliza's letters. One of the scenarios penned by Urbana was about the specific responsibilities of women in society, and these can be perceived through the line;

*ang dasalan, at nang matutong cumilala at maglingcod sa Dios; ang pagbasa nang sulat, cuenta, pagsulat, pananahi, at nang maalís sa cahanḡalan.*

Table 2  
An Analysis of the Episode Ang Catungculan ng Tauo sa Dios

Episodes	Scenes	Behavioral Symbol	Established Meaning (Religion)	Society's Developed Views (Good/Bad)	Cultural Values and Ethics
Paquiipagcapous Tauo	Urbana waking up early in the morning	Hardworking	It is in woman nature to be industrious	Women should be hardworking if lazy, flawed	Housekeeping
	Urbana thinking about God first thing in the morning	Godly woman, Devoted	Pure-hearted, Godly, Devoted	Women should be devoted to God and exhibit it through praying	Virtuous
	Urbana asking for her parents permission	A good and thoughtful daughter	Deference of a loving daughter	Daughters should show obedience and respect towards parents	Filial Piety
	Urbana's teaching about being able to give something to their parents			It is the parent's pride if their daughter is thoughtful of them	
	Urbana walking slowly and gazing politely in public	Modest woman	Demurity and Gracefulness	A woman should act modest and reserved A woman who is not graceful is flawed	Poised

Mentioning *cahanġalan* that is *kahangalan* in modern Filipino, which translates to stupidity in English, it is clear that Urbana believes that being educated and knowledgeable of these collective qualities of womanhood during the Spanish Period equates to being “refined”. It is also observed in the letter that Urbana strongly claimed that not being seasoned with such traits is forthwith considered as idiocracy. This is evident in the line where she is ranting to Feliza as to why the teacher has to teach praying first to their class because her classmates are still ignorant about it.

*Dahilan sa cahanġalang ito nangm manga bata, ay di unang itinuro nang Maestra,i, ang dasalan,*

Such views of Urbana regarding womanhood insist that women in the Philippines during the Spanish Period are urged and pressured to master the main functions of being a woman in society, giving emphasis to the Cultural Values and Ethics imposed to them with regard to basic education for women. As read from this episode, basic education for women encompasses learning how to pray and serve the Lord, reading, writing, learning how to allocate budgets for household expenses, and lastly, stitching. The following line affirms that such basic education for women should be taught at home by the parents according to Urbana;

*Sa carununġang cu-milala sa Dios ó sa cahanġalan, ay nahahayág ang casipagan nang marunong na magulang na magturo sa anac, ó ang capabayaan.*

In the letter, Urbana also asserts that such qualities and behaviors could also be taught through a nunnery if the parents cannot.

*marami ang dumarating na bata, na ipinagcacatiuala nang magulang sa aquing maestra, at ipinag bibilin na pag pilitang macatalastás nang tatlong daquilang catungculan nang bata*

In the second scenario, Urbana talks about her maidenly behavior at church taught by her teacher:

*Sa pagluhód namin, ay ibinabaua nang Maestra, na palibotlibotin ang matá, itinuturo na itungó ang ulo, at nang houag malibáng sa lumalabas at pumapasoc na tauo. Cun cami,i, naquiquinyig nang sermón, ay tinutulutang umupó cami, nguni, ipinagbabaua ang maningcayád, sapagca,t, sa lalaqui ma,t, sa babaye, ay mahalay tingnan ang upóng ito, at tila ucol lamang sa hayop. Sa Pagupó na- min, ay ipinagbibilin nang Maestra na cami ay magpacahinhin, itatahimic ang bibig, matá at boong catauan,*

These proper conducts are forms/symbols of modesty and

according to Urbana are taught by her teacher (in which during the Spanish Period are nuns). The above-mentioned appropriateness is thereby established by the church, and society conforms to these teachings through communicating how to act refined especially when inside the church (as observed as to how Urbana communicates these conducts to her sister as well). Without a doubt, Catholics willingly follow these standards as they believe that what the church teaches is the ultimate truth believing that church attendants are much closer to God. The downside of not following these standards is that one is immediately compared to an animal, ascribing flaws. Being prim and proper is one of the Cultural Values and Ethics observed from a Filipina during the Spanish Period and it is evident in this exemplary novel as well.

Table 3  
An Analysis of the Episode Ang Aasalin sa Simbahan

Episodes	Scenes	Behavioral Symbol	Established Meaning (Religion)	Societal Interaction (Good/Bad)	Cultural Values and Ethics
Ang Aasalin sa Simbahan	Women exhibiting vanity upon going to church	Blasphemy	Narcissism	A woman should ignore her surroundings and do what is necessary when inside a church.	Church etiquette
				It is sacrilegious for a woman to put herself first when in church	
	The proper clothing for women when inside a church	Respectful	A woman should wear proper clothes when inside a church.	Wearing improper clothes when inside a church is irreverence	
			The improper clothing for women when inside a church	Conservative	

The fourth episode, *Ang aasalin sa simbahan*, shows Feliza how women should act when in church. One of the scenes talked about how women, upon going to church, check their surroundings first if they have attracted someone to look at their beauty.

*Marami ang naquiquita sa manga babayeng nagsisipasoc sa simbahan, na lumalacad na di nagdarahan nagpapacagaslao-gaslao, at cun mariquit ang cagayacan, ay nagpapalin-gaplin-gap, na anaqua tinitin-gnan cun may nararahuyo sa caniya.*

This portrays women being conscious of one’s self which symbolizes blasphemy as they are supposed to focus their attention to praying rather than themselves. The aforementioned line also emphasizes that a woman of beauty is full of herself when she is cognizant of how others view her and this as well is considered as sacrilegious. As per Urbana, when a woman is inside a church, she should ignore her surroundings and pay respect to God as this portrays devotedness. The line,

*Marami ang namamanyo nang nan-gan-ganinag, nacabin-git lamang sa ulo at ang modang ito,i, dala hangang sa paquiinabang at pagcocompisál*

shows a scenario that troubles Urbana, of how women are wearing improper clothing when inside a church, even bringing such inappropriateness to the extent of wearing the improper clothing when making a confession that is supposed to be holy and sacred. This concern of Urbana regarding the proper outfit to be worn at church symbolizes her conservativeness. In the letter, it can also be seen that Urbana expressed her frustration as evident in the line:



*¡Oh Feliza! ¿napasaan caya ang galang sa lugar Santo? ¿napasaan caya ang canilang cahinhinán? Diyata,i, lilimutin na nang man~ga babayeng cristiano yaong utos sa canila ni S. Pablo na pinapagtataquip nang muc~ha sa loob nang simbahan, pacundan~gan sa man~ga Angeles?*

The line above gives an implication that the Catholics take proper church clothing seriously as for them it also signifies the respect an individual has towards the church. The impropriety when it comes to church clothing therefore is immediately considered as irreverence seeing that Urbana is questioning the morality of women with regards to their aforementioned behaviors when in church. Another scene from the letter,

*Houag bobonotin ang paa sa chapin, sapagca,t, isang casalaulaan.*

symbolizes image-consciousness as showing of feet is considered as indelicacy in accordance with the church, *sapagca,t, ga nacamumuhi sa malinis na matá ang ipaquita.*

A fastidious woman is regarded as ideal as she makes an effort to uphold social standards, particularly by making an effort to conceal her feet with a skirt and shoes. If she does otherwise, she is viewed as disgusting.

*nan~gan~ganinag sa isang babaye ay masamang tingnan, sapagca,t, naquiquita ang calahati nang catauan.*

The line stated above describes a woman who wears revealing clothes and not being conscious about it as being scandalous according to Catholicism since the church insists that wearing indecent clothing is disgusting.

*Ang magluang nang bilog, ang mamaro nang maikli, ang babaye na di marunong magin~gat nang caniyang pagquilos, ay parang itinatanyag ang catauan sa mata nang tauo.”*

The line above shows how society views a woman who doesn't wear the proper clothes and doesn't care about her body being watched maliciously is horrid. A woman should wear the proper clothing which covers her sensitive parts of the body to avoid being as revolting. This would link to the next scene which is a woman not being conscious of one's actions and behaving indecorously.

*Sucát alalahanin nang man~ga namamaling binibini ang malinis na uani nang isda, na tinatauag na Pesmullier. Ang isdang ito, ang sabi, ay may suso sa dibdib, ang palicpic ay malalapad: pagnahuli nang man~gin~gisda, caraca raca ay ibanababá ang palicpic at itinataquip sa dibdib at nang di maquita. ¡Magandang caasalan na sucát pagcunang halimbaua nating man~ga babaye!*

Here, Urbana reminds Feliza of a kind of fish which has a feature that shows its breast but also has wide fins that the fish uses to hide its breast when being caught by a fisherman. Urbana explained that women should be reminded by this fish in being conscious of one's self as doing the opposite symbolizes impropriety.

*Salamat, Feliza, sa iyong magandang ugali, na pinagsususón mo ang baro, at iniin~gatan mong maquita nang matá ang iyong catauan.*

Urbana is then thankful, as this line states, because Feliza is conscious of her own behavior, as not doing so represents recklessness. Urbana shared this learning as it worries her when Feliza isn't following the standard of being clean and conscious to one's actions as it speaks to one's status as a woman which also reflects a woman's family reputation.

*Casunod nang calinisan sa pananamit ang calinisan at cahasayan sa pamamahay;*

The final scene makes it clear that maintaining cleanliness and making an effort with your appearance are not the only things you should pay attention to; you should also be aware of your surroundings because that reflects your standing as a woman.

*sapagca,t, ang carumihan at caguluhán ay nagbabantóg sa nananhic na ang namamahay ay culang sa bait, anyaya at magasó.*

This is symbolized by the Catholics as dull-wittedness determining that being beautiful means nothing if you don't know how to maintain cleanliness in your surroundings. Being beautiful, rich, and wise equates to nothing if a woman doesn't know how to observe and be apprehensive of one's surroundings. This is because the orderliness of an abode reflects the character of the woman residing. If a woman doesn't know how to perform such cleanliness, this could taint her image as read in the lines,

Table 4  
An Analysis of the episode Sa Calinisan

Episodes	Scenes	Behavioral Symbol	Established Meaning (Religion)	Societal Interaction (Good/Bad)	Cultural Values and Ethics
Sa Calinisan	Women audaciously wearing unmaidenly clothes	Vulgarity	Scandalous	A woman should wear proper attire to avoid being considered revolting Not wearing modest clothing is considered disgusting	Church etiquette
	Women indecorously behaving	Impropriety	Reckless behavior	A woman should be conscious of her actions as it affects the family reputation Acting recklessly speaks of her status as it reflects the family reputation	Proper conducts for women
	Women being mindless of her cluttered surrounding	Dull-witted	Physical appearance is nothing	A woman should be mindful of her environment considering her family's reputation The orderliness of an abode reflects the character of the woman residing the house	Housekeeping

In this 15th letter, Urbana shared what she had learned from her teacher about how women should know cleanliness as it mirrors your morality as visible in the lines,

*Alinsunod sa pagsunód co sa cahin~gian mo na isulat co sa iyo ang mágandang aral na aquing tinangap sa maestra, ay minatapat co na dito,i, ipahayag sa iyo ang ayon sa calinisan.... sapagca,t, ang cahasayan nang calinisan sa asal ay salamin nang calinisan nang caloloua.*

The first scene explains how improper clothing symbolizes as vulgarity as this scene states,

*Cun ang pananamit na di nagcacabagay-bagay ay nacatataua, ang pananamit na mahalay ay nacasusuclam at nacarimarim.*

The bad image it brings when wearing unmaidenly clothes is referred to as ridiculous clothing. This expresses that whatever kind of clothing a woman wears, it is essential to be conscious of what a woman should wear as this would define how clean a woman is.

*Cun magsoot ang isang babaye nang barong nan~gan~ganinag, ualang tapapecho ó panaquip sa dibdib, ay nacasusuclam tingnan, at ang may panaquip man ay di rin naitatago ang catauan at cahit paganhin ang barong*

*Sucar na tandaan nang isang dalaga na siya ma,i, maganda, mayaman at marunong maghiyas cun di marunong magmasid: sapagca,t ang babaye ang nagiingat nang susi nang carangalan sa pamamahay, carangalang sinisira nang sambulat na babaye.*

Society values this as people are keen to a woman who is mindful of her environment, considering that she reflects the family's reputation. Accordingly, a woman who cleans after utilizing a commodity, wherever she is, may it be in the house, school, or church, valuing orderliness, is considered decent and beautiful as evident in the line,

*hatol co sa iyo na anomang gamitin mo ay isauli sa pinagcunang lugar, at bago isauli ay linisin cun narumihán. Ang hagdanan, cocina at hihigan ang nagsasaysay nang calinisan nang may bahay, caya dapat pagin~gatan*

**Table 5**  
An Analysis of the Episode Sa Pagpapacial Analysis

Episodes	Scenes	Behavioral Symbol	Established Meaning (Religion)	Society's Developed Views (Good/Bad)	Cultural Values and Ethics
Sa Pagpapacial	A woman fancying attention	Attention-seeking	A woman wanting to be complimented is conceited	A need for other people's commendation is considered vain A woman should only focus on bettering her flaws instead of good attributes	Humbleness
	Women wiggling hips while walking		A woman swaying her hips while walking, then briefly looks at at men is a flawed and is an ungodly woman	A woman swaying hips while walking is considered improper for women	
	A woman being overly dressed than expected	Conservative	A woman who dresses excessively is a seeker of unnecessary attention	A woman who dressed lavishly is a self-promoting woman	Proper clothing
	A woman being sensitive of her dignity		A woman deliberately thinking of her honor is synonymous to being a gem	A woman's virginity is her value so it needs to be protected	Maidenhood
	A man or a woman loudly stamping their feet while walking inside the church		Intrusiveness	A person who carelessly walks inside a church is distracting and infuriating	A person who's incautious of the surrounding is considered troublesome

The 17th letter, *Sa Pagpapacial*, written by Urbana to Feliza, includes a scene in which a woman standing in public should avoid drawing attention because it will cost more criticism than compliment. Other than that, it is also stated that one should also not be confident in displaying one's positive characteristics; rather, one should be aware of one's shortcomings because it reflects vanity, as depicted in this line,

*Cun lumalacad sa daan huag magnanasang mapuri nang lahat, sapagca,t, cun may isang pumuri ay sampuó ang pupúla. Huag isalalob ang caniyang carunon~gan, camahalan, cagandahan at dalang cabutihán, ang alalahanin ay ang sarili niyang casiraan at dalang capintasan, at nang matutong magpacababa nang loob at asal, malayo ang capalaloan, at houag mamihásang maghambog nang di tauaguig ulól.*

The lines above imply that a confident woman is vain, and such behavior is considered conceited by Catholic standards. This is because women are expected to conceal themselves at all times, giving an implication that society views such a woman seeking praise and admiration from others as vain. In this letter, it is also inferred that society considers vanity as a poor behavior as a woman should only focus on improving one's flaws rather than the positive attributes. This depicts the Cultural Values and Ethics of the Filipino community during the Spanish Period in which the community regards a woman as virtuous if she embodies humility.

In yet another scene, a woman is deemed to be malicious if her hips sway as she walks. According to the standards set by

the church, such behavior is ungodly and it denotes a flawed woman. This behavior is viewed by society as an improper act for a lady, and if a woman practices such swaying, her moral integrity may be criticized.

*Sa isang dalaga naman, ay di nababagay ang paglacad na pinag~aaralan, ang magpaquin dingquinding at tumin~gin nang pasuliáp sa naquiquitang binata, sapagca,t, icapupúla sa caniyang asal. Cun ang isang dalaga ay mag paquita sa lacad, sa quilos, at pagtin~gin nang laban sa cabaitan, ay parang nagaanyaya sa lalaquí, na siya,i, aglahiin nang masamá.*

The lines above appear to suggest that a woman walking in a manner that is not deemed appropriate for the public is considered to be disdainful as per societal standards upon which Catholicism served as the foundation.

Another scene in the letter says that a woman's beauty is a gift from God that should be cherished and by preserving her purity, a woman maintains her dignity. A woman who prioritizes maintaining her modesty is comparable to a gem. One's value, however, diminishes if they are tainted. As per the lines,

*Cun pinagcalooban nang Pan~ginoong Dios nang cagandahan, ay alagaan at paca~in~gatan na parang isang lirio, bacuran nang cabaita,t, tinic nang cahinhinan at nang di pan~gahasang pitasin nang salangapang na camáy. Paca isipin nang dalaga, na ang caniyang puri, ay maipagahalimbaua sa cayamanan, sa hiyas na iisa~isa na ini~in~gatan, sa minsang masira,i, di na maooli, sa minsang malaglág ay di na madarámpot.*

According to these lines, a woman is precious in the eyes of the church if she is aware of her actions that might compromise her purity. As a result, society came to believe that a woman's innocence is indeed valuable and needs to be safeguarded. The fact that a woman's maidenhood lies in this has a significant impact on her reputation. Overdressed women out for socializing are seen as attention seekers, and is promoting one's self as the line goes,

*Cun nanglalansan~gan ang isang babaye, at napamumutihan nang mariquit na damit at mahahalagang palahiyasan, at parang naguawalang bahala, sapagca,t, masamang tingnan ang palaguin nagaayos sa daan, hindi matuloy ang lacad, at toui na,i, pinagmamasdan ang boong catauan.*

because of a standard based on the belief of the church, a woman dressing extravagantly is thought to be trying to attract unnecessary attention, leading society to believe that she is promoting herself. As a result, it sends the message that a woman who wears more than usual isn't respecting herself, and it also promotes the ideal appearance for women is just to be as simple as one can.

A person loudly stamping their foot while walking inside a church is depicted in this letter in another scene. Such behavior is viewed as intrusive and careless because it enrages other people and distracts the others, and shows no respect for church standard, shown in these lines,

*Ang lalaquí o babaye na cun lumalacad sa simbahan, ay di nagdarahan, ang tulin ay di hamac at cun nagchichinelas ay sumasagadsad, bucod sa masamang tingnan, nacalilibang sa*

*nagdarasal na tauo, nacapagbibigay galit at di malayo macayurac sa nan-galuluhod, ay nagpapahayag na uala sa caniyang caloob ang pagpasoc sa bahay nang Dios.*

These imply that it is being unmindful of the surroundings and carelessness on the part of the church, which also led the society to believe that people who behave in this way are troublesome and have no respect for church etiquette.

Table 6  
An Analysis of the Episode Ang Pagiisip-isip ni Feliza

Episodes	Scenes	Behavioral Symbol	Established Meaning (Religion)	Society's Developed Views (Good/Bad)	Cultural Values and Ethics
Ang Pagiisip-isip ni Feliza	Feliza pondering whether she has the power to act on her thoughts in order to maintain her chastity	Restrained	Pre-marital intercourse should be avoided by women	It is a woman's responsibility not to easily give into impulse It is a woman's failing if she is enticed	Conservatism
	A woman guided by her parents is in the right path	Exemplarity	A woman guided by her parents is considered divine	Parents holds an important role woman in guiding their children to the right path Being orphaned is considered directionless	Parental guidance
	A woman considering her family's reputation when choosing a partner	Dutiful Daughter	Family is to be considered before marriage	A woman prioritizing her family's status is an obliged woman In choosing a spouse, a woman is thought to be demonstrating her concern for her family.	Importance of Family and Reputation

The episode *Ang Pagiisip-isip ni Feliza* is the novel's 22nd letter, written by Feliza and addressed to Urbana, contains three significant scenes, the first of which shows Feliza contemplating whether or not she will be able to carry out the action she has imagined when confronted with reality, considering Catholic teachings, which women ought to abstain from promiscuity.

*Cun magcagayon na,i, di catulad co,i, isang marupoc na daong na inabot nang sigua sa guitna nang dagat, pinagtutulong-tulong-gang hampasin nang salu-salubong na han-gin, ibaba,t, itaas, nang matataas na daluyong; cahima,t, ang timon nang cabaitan ay di masisira, cun uala na ang pilotong macapagaalaga; ¿masasabi cayang macasasadsad sa guilid, macapan-gan-ganlong sa han-gin, at di mababagbag sa laot? Ang puring inin-gat nang aquing pusong daong na marupoc, cun pagtulong-tulong-gang hampasin nang marahas na han-gin nang hibo,t, paraya, cahit anong bait, cahit anong hinhin, cahit anong ilag ang aquing gamitin, at ipagsangalang cun mapag-isa na,t abotin nang hina,*

This causes society to hold the view that it is a woman's duty to resist fleeting temptation, as it is a woman's failure if one cannot repel the urge, even if the man initiates, it is her responsibility as long as she is seduced.

*¿masasabi co cayang dili mababagbag sa laot? ¿Di caya isang capan-gahasan, cun aquing uicain na ang capurihan co at calinisan, ay ma iin-gatan co rin sa calaguitnaan nang suson-susong pan-ganib? isang capan-gahasan at isang caulolan.*

The temptation to give in when a woman is touched intimately is too great, even if she is resolute and has a strong desire to protect herself it will still be her fault to be enticed regardless of who initiated the act. Feliza is not explicitly told this, but the fact that she thinks this way reflects the general understanding and belief during the Spanish Period on the fate of women, which is based on the Church's teachings. As a result, being conservative in nature became a cultural value for women.

A narrative about a woman who is led to the right path by her parents is featured in the episode's second scene. When a woman's parents are present to provide guidance, she is viewed as flawless. But she is flawed when left alone because she is defenseless.

*Cun ang isang dalaga,i, may bait at may nag aalagang magulang, cun may mag banta man nang di matouid, ay di mapanibulos at palibhasa,i, ang macacabanga,i, dalauang cabaca ang cabaitan nang isang dalaga, at ang alang alang sa magulang. N-guni cun maulila na, ang cabaitang ito na parang isang cutang tangolan nang puri nang isang virgen, cun mapag-isa na,t, uala nang magtangol, ¿di caya pagpahamacang lusobin nang pan-gahas na loob?*

According to Catholic teachings, it is a privilege for women to have their parents, but it is also the responsibility of the parents to help society recognize the crucial role they play in steering a daughter's life in the right direction. So, when someone is orphaned, it is assumed that they are lost because they have no one to show them the way. The notion that unguided women are more prone to vulnerability was created by this belief. Another scene in this episode includes Feliza writing a letter to her mother regarding choosing a spouse,

*Cun maquilala co na ang caniyang pagibig ay di paimbabao, asal niya,t, asal co ay nagcaca-isa, ang magugulang niya,t, man-ga capatid ay macacasundo co, ay asahan mo, ina, na aco ay caniya, n-guni cun sa caniyang familia, ay may ipipintas ang tauo sa bayan, at ang capintasang ito ay icasisira nang ating puri, ayipahintulot mo, ina, na di co ipayag sa caniya ang aquing puso, at inaasahang co naman na ang sagot cong hindi, ay di mo icapopoot.*

This scene represents a responsible daughter who considers the reputation and status of the family when selecting a partner based on the Catholicism-based training she received from her parents, who place a high value on family reputation. The reputation of a family is influenced by a woman's public persona. As a woman represents the image of her family, the glory or disgrace of a family is determined by how the women of the household uphold it. A woman should be cautious of her actions and choices because her shame is the shame of her entire family. A woman's choice of partner is a reflection of her affection towards the family. In this way, a woman who puts her family's reputation first is viewed by society as being obligated.

Table 7  
An Analysis of the Episode Aral sa Manga Ina na May Manga Anac na Dalaga

Episodes	Scenes	Behavioral Symbol	Established Meaning (Religion)	Society's Developed Views (Good/Bad)	Cultural Values and Ethics
Aral sa Manga Ina na May Manga Anac na Dalaga	A suitor visiting the lady's house should not be served by the lady herself	Decency	Serving one's suitor personally is not allowed	It is worrisome if the lady being wooed is serving her suitor herself especially if the parents are absent. If the parents allowed their daughter to serve her suitor they are putting their daughter's purity in danger	Customary courting practices
	A mother being the one responsible of her daughter's fate	Accountability	A daughter's purity is to be upheld by the mother	Mothers are important in nurturing and keeping her daughter's purity. The mother is to blame if her daughter is practicing unchastity	Role of Mothers
	A woman having a private conversation with a man	Naivety	Being unchaperoned shows lack of sophistication	It is unadmirable for a woman to talk with a man secretly The mother is to blame if her daughter is practicing unchastity	Modesty

The 25th letter contains an episode titled Aral sa Manga Ina na May Manga Anac na Dalaga. In this episode, a scene of a suitor visiting the woman's home is shown. Wherein it is thought that the lady shouldn't serve the suitor as it puts the woman's dignity and the family's reputation in danger. It is decency on the part of the parents to not leave the two alone, especially in the dark.

*Cun sa bahay nang dalaga ay may pumanhic na baguntauo, cun may inin~gat na bait ang magulang, ay di dapat ipahintulot na ang anac na dalaga ay gumamit nang bandeja, lalo,t, cun di nahaharap ang ama ó ina, magpan~gan~ga sa baguntauo, sapagca,t, cun ualang inin~gat na mahal na asal, ay capilitang bubuhatin ang camay ó paá, iquiquilos nang masama, lalo,t, cun na sa dilim.*

Even in the presence of her parents, it is considered improper for a lady to serve the man courting her. Consequently, the idea that a woman serving a man alone is unsettling in society and this prompts rumors to spread. When parents permit their daughter to serve the man, it is viewed as endangering the woman's dignity. As a result, traditional courtship practices took on outstanding value to preserve the lady's pride. As it is a mother's primary duty to uphold her daughter's purity as emphasized in another scene. Here, the mother is held accountable. It is also a mother's responsibility to instill in her daughter appropriate behavior, in order for her to be worthy of serving as a vessel for God. As such, mothers should impart in their daughters a sense of femininity and godliness. According to the society's perspective, which is reflected in this line,

*Pacatantoin nang ina, na ang calinisan nang isang dalaga ay parang isang bubog, na cahit di magcalamat, cahit di mabasag, mahin~ghan lamang ay nadurun~gisan. Cun icao,i, may anac na babaye ay turoan mong matacot sa Dios, houag pagpapaquitaan nang n~gipin, paca~in~gatan ang canilang pagca virgen,turoang magmahal sa asal at magpaca hinhin, nang di lapastan~ganin nang binata.*

A mother's protection and teachings is crucial in preserving and protecting a lady's dignity, so it is expected of her that her daughter stays untarnished and pure. This is another instance of a mother being blamed for a woman's outcome as being a mother became the main role of women and this mostly identifies the value of a woman. According to the catholic faith, another scene in which a woman is speaking privately to a man represents naivete due to the fact that she converses with a man without a chaperone. A woman who engages in this behavior is then perceived by society as lacking sophistication. It has become unacceptable for a woman to engage in a private discussion because she will be perceived as a harlot. Since women are expected to value modesty, it is assumed that they are flawed if they are unable to do so. As evident in this line,

*Cun ang isang dalaga ay naquiquipag usap nang lihim sa baguntauo, ¿saan caya natin maipag hahalimbaua, cundi sa libay na usá, na hinahabol nang áso, na di tutugutan hangang di abutang macagat, at mapatay?*

Since the Church's teachings at that time had a significant impact on how people viewed and understood the world, Catholicism served as the foundation for how society perceived. The people, especially Urbana and Feliza, adhere to the

behaviors and beliefs mentioned above because whatever the church says becomes the norm of living, despite the fact that one gender makes greater sacrifices than the other. This episode emphasizes that being a mother also means being the representation of the family reputation—these became the primary roles of women in society.

Table 8  
An Analysis of the Episode Cahatulan sa Paglagay sa Estado

Episodes	Scenes	Behavioral Symbol	Established Meaning (Religion)	Society's Developed Views (Good/Bad)	Cultural Values and Ethics
Cahatulan sa Paglagay sa Estado	Conforming to the standards of how a wife should function	Desirable Wife	A conforming wife is praiseworthy	Women should conform according to God's will Women must reinvent themselves according to the Sacred Sacrament of Matrimony	Sacred Sacrament of Matrimony

The 28th episode titled *Cahatulan sa Paglagay sa Estado*, a series of holy verdicts referred to as the Sacred Sacrament of Matrimony was introduced by Urbana to her younger sister considering that Feliza is determined to get married. In the letter, a set matrimonial beliefs and values were discussed about how both genders should function. However, distinct details of the verdicts believed to enable the couple to attain a successful marriage were dominantly conveyed for women to follow than for men. Details such as “wives should not be richer than their husbands” is tackled as it is believed that it will create a confusion of the roles of both genders in the household, making wives as the man in the relationship, and women as the men as apparent in the line;

*Ang babaye ay huouag mapacalubha ang yaman sa lalaqui. Sapagca,t cun magca gayo,i ang babaye ang maguiguig lalaqui at ang lalaqui ang maguiguig babaye.*

When it comes to beauty, the Catholics also have something to say to the women in the relationship, advising women who want to or are considering to appear beautiful in the eyes of the public that they should refrain from doing so because it may give men or their husbands anxiety considering that many may be attracted to such beauty portrayed, leading to jealousy.

*Ang cagandahan ng babaye na hahanapin ay caiguihan lamang at huag lumabis sapagca,t cun lumabis, marahil ay di matahimic ang lalaqui sasaguian nang agam~agam na sa caramihan nang nalulugod sa caniyang esposa ay baca siya paglilohan.*

Aside from beauty, women are also encouraged to possess and exhibit a series of positive attitudes listed by a priest that are considered holy and are praiseworthy by their spouse. The entire episode was all about how to be a perfect wife, and it was stated that if a man finds a woman possessing such “holy” standards, then he is blessed, as according to the Sacred Sacrament of Matrimony, the value of having this kind of wife is considered greater than having all the riches in the world. These are evident in the lines;

*Ang babayeng hinahanap at pinupuri nang haring Salomón ay ang may inin~gat na bait, di ang may cagandahan at palibhasa,i, madaling lamipas, and*

*cung sino ang maca quiquila nang isang babayeng timtiman, na ang camabalan ay higit sa camahalan nang lahat nang cayamanan sa mundó: Mapalad, ang uica nang Dios Espirito Santo, ang lalaqui na may asauang banál.*

If one is to read this entire episode, one can surely observe

that most of the aforementioned standards according to the Sacred Sacrament of Matrimony focuses on the proper behavioral conduct of women in marriage. Although some points say that both husband and wife should possess the traits to have a successful marriage, it can't be denied that it is mostly addressed to women.

*Character Beliefs:*

The tables below contain data used to determine the Cultural Values and Ethics present in the beliefs presented by Urbana and Feliza in Modesto de Castro's epistolary novel. The cultural values and ethics displayed in the beliefs of Urbana and Feliza is therefore analyzed using Wollstonecraft's Liberal Feminism Theory.

Table 9  
Character Belief Analysis of Feliza

Character	Beliefs	Cultural Values and Ethics
Feliza	Women should be hardworking. If lazy, flawed	Housekeeping
	Women should be devoted to God and exhibit it through praying	Virtuous
	Daughters should show obedience and respect towards parents	Filial Piety
	It is the parent's pride if their daughter is thoughtful of them	
	A woman should act modest and reserved. If not graceful, flawed	Poised
	It is a woman's responsibility not to easily give into impulse. If enticed, she's a failure	Conservatism
	Parents holds an important role women in guiding their children to the right path	Parental guidance
	Being orphaned is considered directionless	
	A woman prioritizing her family's status is an obliged woman	Importance of Family and Reputation
In choosing a spouse, a woman is thought to be demonstrating her concern for her family.		

In the selected 9 episodes of the novel, 2 of the letters come from Feliza. In those 2 letters, the Cultural Values and Ethics believed by her were the housekeeping duties of women, virtuousness, filial piety, poised, conservatism, the need for parental guidance, and lastly, the importance of family and reputation. These traits of women, firmly believed by society, and taught by the church, portrays the discrimination, oppression, abuse, and domestication of Filipino women during the Spanish Period. Unfortunately, most of these traits exist up until contemporary times which means that these beliefs are thereby heavily supported, followed, and are passed down from generation to generation by our Filipino ancestors. When Feliza stated that it should be in women's nature to be hard-working, doing chores from morning to night, and referring to women as flawed if one doesn't possess such a trait, one can tell that this is a form of domestication. Virtuousness is also strictly imposed as apparent in the novel. The set of standards that are said to display virtuousness is a practice established by the Catholic church in pursuing ideals that are especially unrealistic for women. Clearly, this is a form of injustice as some of these standards are mostly/entirely implemented for women to follow. The same goes with being poised as it forces women to be submissive and fragile while men are allowed to show freely self-conceitedness and insolence without being judged and condemned by society. The form of filial piety tackled by Feliza in which daughters are obliged to give something to their parents (like a personally hand sewn clothing), making it an obligation to do so, is a system that allows the elderly to gaslight and guilt trip their own daughters. Conservatism is also heavily observed in the Filipino culture and is highly practiced up until

contemporary times especially when it comes to courtship. This conservatism allows society to verbally, physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally abuse women if one exhibits liberation in one's behavioral conduct. Such abuse and oppression on women is extensively distinguished by her choice of fashion and one's public display of affection towards another individual. Furthermore, the Filipino culture of giving importance to parental guidance, family and religion portrayed in this novel also gives clear evidence as to why Filipinos are religious and are family-oriented. These traits may exhibit positivity, however, it also carries an unfavorable impact towards children, especially females. As said in the novel, it is a woman's duty to act accordingly with the proper behavioral conduct set by the church as their actions uphold the family reputation. If women make a mistake, it taints the family reputation and it becomes their responsibility to carry the burden of being at fault throughout their entire life. Additionally, the novel also asserts that a woman's choice of partner reflects her love towards her own family and being genuinely concerned with their family reputation. This is because the church teaches society of such a belief, putting pressure on women to put her family and her family's reputation first as an obligation to perform. The following Cultural Values and Ethics aforementioned is a blunt display of oppression against women and it is evident that the novel demands more from women than it does from men while giving most of the credits to men.

Table 10  
Character Belief Analysis of Urbana

Character	Beliefs	Cultural Values and Ethics
Urbana	Daughters should learn the basics. If not seasoned with the basics is foolishness.	Basic Education
	People should act refined at church. Distracted people at church are unrefined.	Prim and Proper
	A woman should ignore her surroundings and do what is necessary when inside a church.	Church Etiquette
	It is sacrilegious for a woman to put herself first when in church.	
	A woman should wear proper clothes when inside a church. Wearing improper clothes is irreverence.	
	It is considered disgusting if a woman lets her feet be seen while praying at church.	
	A woman who tries her best in hiding her feet through her skirt and shoes when in church is feckidious.	Proper Clothing
	A woman should wear proper attire to avoid being considered reviling. If not, disgusting.	
	A woman should be conscious of her actions as it affects the family reputation.	Proper Conduct
	The orderliness of an abode reflects the character of the woman residing the house.	Housekeeping
	Looking for commendation is considered vain. Women must focus on bettering her flaws instead of good attributes.	Humbleness
	A woman swaying hips while walking is considered improper for women.	Prim and Proper
	A woman who dressed lavishly is a self-promoting woman.	Proper Clothing
	A woman's virginity is her value so it needs to be protected.	Maidenhood
	A person who's inattentive of the surrounding is considered troublesome.	Church Etiquette
	It is womsome if the lady is serving her suitor herself especially if the parents are absent.	Courting Customs
The mother is to blame if her daughter is practicing unchastity.	Mother's Role	
It is unadmirable for a woman to talk with a man secretly.	Modesty	
Women must reinvent themselves according to the Sacred Sacrament of Matrimony.	Marriage Sacraments	

Most of the selected letters come from Urbana and according to her, the basic education for women encompasses learning how to pray and serve the Lord, reading, writing, learning how to allocate budgets for household expenses, and lastly, stitching. This aspect of the cultural values and ethics imposed on women during the Spanish Period gives people a significant view of how they were heavily domesticated in the past, discriminating their capabilities through limiting their function in society as housekeepers. Women were expected to maintain the house clean, manipulating them through saying that it reflects the entirety of their identity, controlling them to the extent of

teaching society that it affect one's family reputation when the lady residing shows incompetence to the housekeeping task. Aside from that, women were also compelled to act with modesty, submission and humbleness as exhibiting confidence implies vanity and conceitedness. The choice of fashion is another thing for women to be careful of as it is believed that clothing reflects behavior and identity. So, may it be at church, home or at a social event, women are encouraged to cover their bodies and act prim and proper because society says so. Women are also discouraged to make mistakes wherever they are and behave as demurely as possible as it embodies holiness, elegance, and morals. This holiness demanded from women is related to their virginity. The issue of virginity is also one of the root causes of women discrimination, oppression and abuse as it is considered holy and should be given only to their spouse after getting married in which they are believed to receive the blessing of the priest that allows couples to do marital practices. Once an unmarried woman is deflowered, they are heavily condemned by the public and are now considered dirty and immoral. That is why customary courting practices exist to create boundaries between the unmarried to prevent unmarried couples from indulging in the things in which they are not allowed to do. Another thing is that women are to withstand sexual temptations and are condemned for it. On the contrary, men celebrate premarital sex and even considers it as something that they should be proud of, especially if they have deflowered many.

In marriage, women are also encouraged to follow a set of standards on how to become the perfect wife. Furthermore, most of the aforementioned standards according to the Sacred Sacrament of Matrimony focuses on the proper behavioral conduct of women in marriage, while men get little to none to uphold. When it comes to being a mother, women also hold great responsibility towards nurturing her children. Mothers are condemned if they cannot juggle their function properly as the headmaster of housekeeping and in educating and raising their children. Women are blamed if their children grow up without manners and lacking in guidelines while men can just get away with it by saying that they are the one who strives to earn money to feed the family. From a very young age, women are molded to uphold the socially constructed truth, manipulating them to function according to religious beliefs and socially constructed standards that suit the personal tastes of men (priests). These expectations resulted in the domestication of women and the devaluation of their human potential in light of the constraints imposed by social and religious norms. These factors not only affected how women were viewed with their individuality, but also on how women were perceived in terms of their value in the community, church and in their very own household, questioning their worth if they are deserving of respect. In the novel, it can be seen that the Catholic religion is greatly influenced by the decisions of men. The customs established by the church heavily restrained women's function, which is also the very reason for the harsh implementation of the restriction of their human rights just so one could appear immaculate in the eyes of men. Furthermore, the principles of the catholic church that degrades the value of women heavily separates

them from men, showing an upfront discrimination towards the female gender which is unfair. Filipina's during the Spanish Period indeed experienced abuse, oppression, and discrimination which was masked by the Catholic church as righteous, moral and ethical, and this is all because of gender hierarchy.

## 5. Conclusion

Urbana at Feliza, an epistolary and exemplary fictional novel by Modesto de Castro, contains information on cultural influences on Filipino women's morals and ethics during the Spanish Period that continue to have an impact on Filipino women today. The study employs a qualitative methodology, especially discourse analysis. Additionally, the data collection process is divided into two phases, Phase 1 which analyzes the selected episodes and Phase 2 which scrutinizes characters. Based on the findings it is inferred that Modesto de Castro's novel reveals cultural values and ethics that oppresses Filipino women during the Spanish Period.

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