WHEN THE WORLD OF MAKE BELIEVE BECOMES THE WORLD TO BELIEVE:CHARACTERIZATION, LEGITIMATION, AND MYTHOLOGIZATION OF LAPULAPU NARRATIVES

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ABSTRACT

To delve into the minds of the local people on what constitutes reality, its legitimation and perpetuation was explored in this paper. By using the *Battle of Mactan* narratives as elaborated in the *Lapulapu-Mangal* oral history complex by the key informants, it can be deduced that only through mythology and mythologizing that continuity with the past is made possible for the local people. For the locals, the remote past events were real and their existence on the reality of the past is assured. The maintenance of this assurance is undertaken through their characterization of the personalities in their stories, the legitimation of power, authority and control, and the mythologization of the series of events to boost the glorious past of the community and its people.

1. INTRODUCTION

As etched in the standard Philippine history textbook, the first account of heroism was attributed to *Lapulapu* who was known to be the chieftain of Mactan Island, Philippines the place where the *Battle of Mactan* happened. After this account, nothing can be read about him and the *Battle of Mactan.* As the years move on, the historic Battle of Mactan was turned into an annual festival locally dubbed as *Kadaugan sa Mactan* (Victory at Mactan) by the local government of Lapulapu City as a constant reminder for the Filipinos' love for freedom, patriotism and self-determination, yet still only a few is known about *Lapulapu*.

Folklore studies are significant in numerous ways, hence the studies conducted by scholars were on the practical values of folklore, myths, and oral histories and their contribution on the local or national development. Written accounts of the past events have created impressions on the people they have described primarily because of the availability of documents on a specified topic. Oftentimes, these impressions,which were created because of the author's dialogue and interpretations of events, became a permanent mark on a people and continued to characterize their involvement of such an event.   However, interpretations of the event which were very much influenced by the type of scholarship training authors' received, helped create these impressions. Thus, to correct the misimpressions and misinterpretations of any historical event, authors have taken refuge on local history to examine local people's perception of the event(Schroeder, 2012)and safeguard against manipulation of history from ideological manipulation (Ferguson, 1992). As a protection tool, people's perception is sifted through the lenses of local history as contained in the narration (Robert, 2012).

Creating historical consciousness and developing national pride are the main objectives of any historical studies. To achieve these objectives, collection of local histories, preservation of documents, and encouragement of research and publication are the avenues in raising the historical consciousness and awareness of the present generation (Sandra, 2012) because local histories, myths, and folklores are the repositories of "public memory" (Dennis, 2012). It is through the studies on local history that cultural preservation is made possible, and through it the quality of life of the past can be studied and the present improved, thus enhancing cultural or ethnic identity, community (Jones, 2016) and personality (Mota, 2009). Along this line of thought, this paper explored into the local people's theoretical construction of what constitutes reality, its legitimation, and mythologization of such reality in pursuance of their continuous link with the past. Specifically, this study was aimed toinvestigate the key informants' (KI) approaches of reconstructing the historical event that happened on April 27, 1521 known as the *Battle of Mactan* through their stories in terms of characterization, their concept of legitimation of power, and the attribution of mythical qualities on their stories.

2. METHODS

This study employed the qualitative method which relied solely on the KIs as the main source of information. The respondents in this study were the nine (9) community storytellers, mostly males (67%) and in their senior years in between 60-80 years old (78%) who were known to

the village as having extensive knowledge about *Lapulapu*. These key informants were recruited by using the following qualifications: 1) he/she is either a local resident for at least more than 50 years or at least can trace his/her roots in Barangay *Punta Engaño*, and 2) he/she possessed stories about *Lapulapu* and its surrounding events, and other individuals associated with him.

After preliminary inquiry and assessment, an appointment for interview was arranged according to theKI's most convenient time and place.Open-ended questions coupled with free-wheeling discussion was utilized during the interview process to encourage the KI to recite his/her versions of the story as well as to solicit more information relative to the topics discussed.The key informants were asked to detail their stories on *Lapulapu* via the unstructured interview. The proceedings on these interview sessions were digitally saved for easy storage and retrieval. When all the identified KIs were interviewed, the recordings were transcribed.

After the transcription, the stories were then coded according to the prevailing themes in their narration. To this effect, three (3) themes were identified, namely: 1) characterization of the protagonists including the kin identification and early settlement of the place; 2) factors on the legitimation of power, authority and control, and finally, 3) the approach of mythologization of their narratives.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Brief Background

*KadaugansaMactan*is an annual festival held every 27th day of April at Mactan Island, Cebu, Philippines(Abelgas, 2015). It is used to commemorate the victory of *Lapulapu*, a local chieftain of Mactan, against a foreign invader. *Lapulapu* refused to accept foreign rule and its religion, i.e. Roman Catholicism. In the chronicle of Pigafetta, the event in Mactan Island happened on April 27, 1521.

Oral tradition in Mactan Island yields a complex of legends which constitutes two stories: the story complex of *Datu Mangal*, and the *Lapulapu* hero-legend. Utilizing the stories of the storytellers in this study, different versions can be discerned, however, with very few variations, certain elements along this complexrecur in all the versions being told.

The versions of the story are all centered on two fused folktales: 1) the petrification of *DatuMangal*, and 2) the story on *Lapulapu*'s preparation for the battle and the battle itself. In all the versions, *DatuMangal* was often mentioned as the father of *Lapulapu* and the most powerful chieftain of Mactan Island with either Brgy. *Punta Engaño* or Brgy. Mactan as his domain.

Datu Mangal and *Lapulapu*, acknowledged to be *primus inter pares*among the leaders in Mactan Island, are gifted with superhuman abilities. Other leaders being mythologized in the narration were *Balialho* who could break pestle with his bare hands, *Sampung Baha* who has the ability to stop the deluge of rushing flood water, and *BugtoPasan*, who could break the sturdiest of all vines with empty hands.

As tradition has it, kinship construction was also clear in the narration. *Datu Mangal* was surrounded by a family. Aside from *Lapulapu* as his son and *Malingin* as his daughter, *Bauga* was referred to as *Datu Mangal*'swife. In other version, *Bauga* was not *Lapulapu*'s nor *Malingin*'s

mother. All storytellers did not mention in their narratives if *Lapulapu* had a family of his own. However, in a much earlier study, *Lapulapu* had a wife, *Bulakna*, and a son, *Sawili* (Mojares, 1979). Unfortunately, this information did not surface during the interview. In one version, *Rajah Sulayman* of Manila was *Lapulapu*'s brother.

3.2. The Approach in Storytelling

In their narration, storytellers utilized three approaches in dealing with their accounts on *Lapulapu* and the *Battle of Mactan*. These approaches were the following: characterization, legitimation of authority, and the proclivity for mythologizing the events in the *Mangal-- Lapulapu* complex.

The characterization. Giving concrete attributes to the main participants of the story through kin affiliation and the description of the place where the scenes actually occur bestowed upon the storytellers ownership on the authenticity of the narrative (Gamman & Marshment, 1989), thereby perpetuating their stories. Through thisapproach, the storytellerswere able to convey to their audience that the characters in their narratives were once historically real personalities. Thus, through vivid and real characterization, the narrative authority was established by the storytellers through their demonstration of their extensive knowledge about the place, the events that took place, and the prescription of desired social behavior that locals should maintain, thereby establishing the authenticity of the narratives (Greenholt, 2009). As explained by Olson (1995), "narrative authority is rooted in the personal practical knowledge", and ownership of such narratives would entitle storytellers the privilege to make "evaluative judgments about quality,"(Bielby, Harrington, & Bielby, 1999).Through this "personal practical knowledge", storytellers authenticated through their narrationthe historical existence of these personalities, hence *Mangal*, *Lapulapu*, *Tancillo*, *Malingin* and others were real. For example, in the narratives (all translations are by the authors), *Lapulapu* is portrayed as a brave and a ruthless leader.

"*Lapulapu* is a stern and courageous leader (storyteller 1). And none would attempt
to make fun of him, for he's ruthless (storyteller 6)[1]".

Furthermore, possession of amulets or superhuman properties to characterize leadership is a common theme in the Philippine folklore.   Like any other hero-legend, *Lapulapu* was ascribed withsuperhuman qualitieswhich were not mentioned in the standard history literature.This ascription of superhuman qualities helped in the establishment of the aura of mystery(Bryan, 2012)or possession of "soul stuff" (Angeles, 2007)which greatly imputes the leadership character and authority of leaders.

"You cannot make funwith them, for they are endowed with superhuman abilities
(storyteller 2). Then, they cannot be defeated, for they possess supernatural qualities
and power (storytellers 2,5,7). According to my grandfather, *Mangal* and *Lapulapu*

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[1]"*Si Lapulapu istrikto ngapagkalider,pero dili salbahis (storyteller 1). Ug walay mopasipala adto niya kay maldito man kadto nga pagkalider*" *(storyteller 6).*

possessed supernatural powers or abilities (storyteller 6). These two people possessed amulets[2]," (storyteller 9).

In this narration, both *Mangal* and *Lapulapu* were gifted with extraordinary abilities. Besides, the narratives did not mention the origin of such gifts or powers but merely attests that these folk heroes were invested with godlike powers. However, human-like character is not lost in the narration. The inclusion of *Lapulapu*'s kin in the narration strengthens the human qualities of *Mangal* and *Lapulapu* as well as with their kinsmen, namely: *Bali-Alho, Sampung Baha, BugtoPasan, and Tancillo*. Hence, it can be deduced that supernatural qualities cannot be divorced from leaders and consequently, leaders should possess qualities that are not possessed by ordinary mortals.

"*DatuMangal* is the father of *Lapulapu* and *Malingin*. Her wife is *Bauga*, but she is alleged to be not the mother of *Lapulapu* and *Malingin*. His followers were *Sampung Baha*, *BugtoPasan*, and *Balialho*. x xx Once there was a businessman who used to visit *Punta Engaño* to sell religious images called *Tancillo*. x x x. *Tancillo* possessed superhuman abilities[3]", (storyteller 2)

Characterization also applies to landmarks or places believed to be the leaders' abode. The *Mangal* stone in Bo. *Mangal* and the *Malingin* Stone in Bo. *Malingin* are examples of these. The local people believed that these landmarks were *Datu Mangal* and *Malingin* themselves. As such, they possessed extraordinary attributes just like the *personae* they represent, hence certain forms of reverence have to be afforded to them. The immediate vicinity where these stones were located were believed to be their sanctuaries. Believing that these stones possessed extraordinary powers, the location was labelled as *hilan*, meaning sacred, isolated, and dedicated.Failure to show respector desecrate the place would result to harmful consequence. This behavioral prescription is both applied to the local residents and visitors of the place.

"That rock is enchanted. If you passed by it, and especially if you are a stranger in this place, you have to give rice, fish, wood, and bread as a manner of respect for that

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[2] "*Dili ni nimo sila ka komedyahan ug estorya, gitahud ni sila kay gamhanan ug may abilidad (storyteller 2). Unya dili mapildi kay may mga **gahum**- **gahum** diay (storytellers 2, 5, 7). Unya ang estorya sa akong apohan, nga si Mangal ug Lapu-Lapu, kanang duha duna silay **birtud** o **gahum**-**gahum** (storyteller 6). Kini sila mga tawhana may mga **anting-anting**," (storyteller 9).*

[3] "*Si Datu Mangal, mao na siya ang amahan niLapulapu ug Malingin. Ang iya [DatuMangal]asawa kay siBauga, pero dili siya ang inahan kunong Lapulapu ug Malingin. Ug iyang mga sakop, gitawag ug Sampung Baha, Bugto Pasan, Balialho. x xx. Unya naa kunoy negosyante nga mag-arian nga namaligya ug Santos nga ginganlan ug Tancillo x xx Kana siTancillo, naa siya'y gahum", (storyteller 2)*

is his sanctuary, for if you won't give, waves will rise and you will be drowned x xx[4]" (storyteller 3).

Legitimation of authority.Legitimation is a process whereby a belief, assumption, practice, values or process becomes acceptable according to the set standards or norms(Pratto & Pitpitan, 2008). From this notion,it can be assumed that legitimation is based on the subordinated groups' willingness to accept an authority (Baranov, 2015). Where authority is to be exercised, consensus is needed in itslegitimation.

Property ownership and its relation are paramount concern in the legitimation practices (Burley & Harris, 2002; Grinlinton & Taylor, 2011). In the legitimation process, traditional practices were the primary consideration in the deliberation of consensus. This deliberate process in the solicitation of consensus permeates through the different strata of society whereby different stakeholders participate in the deliberation process (Baranov, Mamychev, & Ovchinnikov, 2015). For instance, the legitimation on the access to consumption goods is founded and differentiated by gender including the holding of feasts and possession of prestige commodities (Baranov et al., 2015; Bettina, 1999; Clarke, 2004; Costin & Earle, 1989; Zelditch, 2001). In other words, property ownership and relations and the possession of honor and prestige commodities legitimize authority.

In the narration, legitimation of authority is founded on the property ownership through territorial claims. Leadership is bounded by territory, and the establishment of territorial claims is connected with property ownership which consequently is related with authority and power as well as the demand for compliance(Aijmer, 2010; Angeles, 2007; Sikor & Lund, 2009). However, this relationship between property and authority may change overtime and by the exigency of this relationship, power may be exerted if relationship is violated or not observed. Furthermore, validation of authority is founded through one's connection to the remote mysterious past to establish the differentials of statuses between the governing and the governed (Ali, 2013; Clarke, 2004; Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015).

Possession of amulets (*anting – anting*) and other supernatural or superhuman abilities are forms of establishing the status differentials between leaders and subjects, thus distinguishing leaders different from ordinary mortals(Bullard, 2015; Costas & Grey, 2014). In the narratives, when storytellers invested leaders with superhuman attributes, power and authority were also clothed upon them, hence leaders can exact obedience and loyalty from their subjects. By asserting authority, leaders in return have the moral duty to protect their territory from invaders (Ford & Rowse, 2013; Koppell, 2010).

"The pestle of *Balialho*, if struck on a trunk of a coconut tree, can penetrate. *Sampung Baha* can stop floods (storyteller 2). These people have supernatural powers. *Mangal*'s voice is powerful; it can petrify those who can hear his voice if cursed (storyteller 4). *Lapulapu* can walk on water (storyteller 7).

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[4]*"Hilan ning batoha, kung moagi ka diha labi na dili ka tagadinhi kay mohatag gayud ug kan-on, isda, kahoy ug pan, agi ug pagrespeto kay iya man ng teritoryo, kung di mohatag, modagko ang bawod ug malunod ka x xx", (storyteller 3).*

The battleground where Magellan and *Lapulapu* fought have lots of mangroves and is muddy. This is one of the factors of *Lapulapu*'s victory over Magellan because all species in both land and sea were being commanded by the *Lapulapu*'s father to help him on his fight against Magellan. Hence, when *Lapulapu* arrived on the scene, Magellan was already tied by the sticky juice of the sea cucumber, stung by wasps and bees, and was already lying on the muddy ground. That is why, *Lapulapu* just struck the forehead of Magellan with a pestle which also possessed powerful attribute[5]," (storyteller 1).

"When Magellan attacked, *Lapulapu* stood his ground, for this is his territory x xx. What I know of, Opon is *Lapulapu*'s domain[6]," (storyteller 4).

In the preceding narration, storytellers emphasized the extraordinary abilities of the protagonists, their superhuman abilities, the victory of the hero-legend, and *Lapulapu*'s exercise of authority and influence. Test of one's competency, courage, and gallantry legitimizes authority and power, hence, going to war legitimates one's position. It has to be reiterated here that unlike other lowland coastal regions or places, legitimacy and authority did not stem from codified qualities of rulers, rather they came from the spirit world which made it possible for them to raise their own followers and be granted "spiritual potency" that made them acquire "acute intelligence, vast knowledge, indomitable power, and self-confidence" and "a robust physique, sharp mind, masterful oratorical style, good fortune, bravery,"(Angeles, 2007). Thus going to war as either offensive or defensive becomes a test of legitimacy of authority. In this connection, it can be deduced that *Lapulapu*'s authority is legitimate and "shall make every effort to maintain its legitimacy and give those subjects to their authority good grounds to acknowledge it," (Beetham, 2013).

Mythologization. In this process, mythical quality is attributed to something. The impartation of mythical quality has been extensively discussed in literature of which the thematic discussion

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[5]*"Kanang alho ni Balialho, kung ipukpok sa lubi molapus sa punuan. Kana si Sampung Baha,ug sampungan ang baha, di na moagas (storyteller 2). May mga gahom ug abilidad man kining mga tawhana. Kana si Mangal, may gahom ang tingog ato, makahimong bato (storyteller 4). Si Lapu-Lapu makalakaw sa dagat" (storyteller 7).*

Ang lugar nga diin sila magkumbati si Magellan ug Lapulapu saMactan kay daghan kaayo na ug kahoy sa pagatpatan ug lapukon nga pagkabas. Mao kini usa sa mga rason nga nagmadaugon si Lapulapu sa ila fight ni Magellan kay gimanduan man sa amahan niLapu-lapu ang tanan mananap sa kamad-an ug sa kadagatan, mga putyukan, buyog, ligwan, bat ug bisan unsang klase sa mananap sa pagtabang sa away nila Magellan. Mao to sa panahon sa gubat pag-abot ni Lapulapu salawisan saMactan, gigapos na si Magellan sa mga tagok sa bat, gibugno na sa mga putyukan ug ligwan ug naghayang na sa lapok. Mao to gipuspusan na lang n iLapulapu sa iyang armas nga alho ang agtang ni Magellan, kining alho naa ni gahom-gahom" (storyteller 1).

[6]*"Pagsulong ni Magellan, dili pasudlan ni Lapulapu kay iyahang man ning baluarte. Xxx Sigon sa nahibaw-an nako, iya ning area kining Lapu-Lapu diri,ang Opon" (storyteller 4).*

revolved along the development of national pride (Andronova & Abrosimova, 2015), understanding the historical past (Aoudé, 2014) and other social issues and problems (Smith, 2016) revolving around the following motifs: a) mystical, b) cosmological, c) sociological, and d) ethical (Morong, 2009).

Mythologies are necessary elements in the life of nations. They explain the existence of a phenomenon, used to enforce the moral standards, and prescription of the consequence if actions fall short of the standard. In other words, mythologies contained shared values. It is in these values that "local people create or re-create their shared aspect of their material and spiritual lives," (Seitel, 2002)which linked them with the shared past for the perpetuation of their cultural identity or boost memorials (Derek, 2012).

In contrast to mythologization, objective historical reconstruction of the past involves rigorous method of data gathering and analysis. Most of the studies conducted pertaining the past is undertaken in order to construct as accurately as possible historical events or to understand historical events(Cohen, 1992). In the course of the study, the gathered data became the prime element in the interpretation of events. During the interpretation of events, historians may stay with the objective truth or may mythologize events to create vivid and interesting historical representations. Past events objectively narrated became dull and uninteresting while past events mythologically narrated cognitively were retained with ease (Aoudé, 2014; Denes, 2015), thus for the local people, mythologization of the *Battle of Mactan* is the vehicle for the perpetuation of their link with the past and the boosting of their memories of *Lapulapu* and the personalities associated with him and the *Battle of Mactan*.

> "In the story, *Lapulapu* won over Magellan because he has a superpower. His followers were *Sampung Baha*, *Bugto Pasan*, and *Balialho*. The pestle of *Balialho*, if struck on a trunk of a coconut tree, it penetrates; *Sampung Baha* can stop the onrush of flood (storytellers 2 & 6). *Bugto Pasan* can snap the sturdiest vines with empty hands (storyteller 5). After the fight, *Lapulapu* went back to his father's place, *Punta Engaño*, but upon his arrival, his father was already turned into a rock. This is the same rock you find in *Sitio Mangal*, because it is sheltered, protected, and private. If fishing, if you pass by *Mangal* and *Malingin* rock, who are *Lapulapu's* father and sister, respectively, you have to offer money, food and respect. Failure to observe, you will be drowned, waves will rise. This is a traditional practice because this place is their sanctuary, endowed with supernatural power[7]", (storyteller 1).

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[7] *"Sigon sa estorya mao nang napildi si Magellan kay si Lapulapu gamhanan man, naa iyang mga sakop, gitawag ug Sampung Baha, Bugto Pasan, Balialho. Kanang alho n iBalialho kung ipukpok sa lubi kana molapus sa lubi. Kana si Sampung Baha, ug sampungan ang baha, di na na moagas (storytellers 2 & 6). Kana gong Pasan, mao man nang uway himoon ug garote unya bugtu-on ra na siya (storyteller 5). Sa pagkahuman sa away batok ni Magellan, niuli si Lapulapu sa yuta sa iyang amahan mao kining Punta Engaño, apan sa iyang pag-uli, bato na ang tanang lawas sa iyang Tatang. Kining batuha makit-an nimo diha sa SitioMangal, gipanganlan kini ug "Batong Mangal. Kining batuha kay hilan. Sa pagpangisda kung maagi sa bato ni Mangal nga gituuhang amahan ni Lapulapu ug ang Batong Malingin, igsoon ni Lapulapu nga naa diha sa dagat sa Malingin, moitsa*

4. CONCLUSION

To delve into the minds of the local people on what constitutes reality, its legitimation and perpetuation was explored in this paper. By using the *Battle of Mactan* as elaborated in the oral history complex of *Lapulapu-Mangal*, it can be deduced that for the local people, only through mythology and mythologizing that continuity with the past is made possible. For the locals, the past events were real and their existence is assured. The maintenance of this assurance is made possible throughtheir characterization of the personalities, legitimation of power, authority and control, and the mythologization of the series of events to boostthe glorious past of the community and its people.

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gayod ug kwarta ug kan-on kay paghalaran ug pagatahuron. Kung dili ka moitsa ikaw pagalunuron, mobawod ang dagat. Usa kini nga gisunod nga pamaagi sa una kay sila usa ka sagrado, nay gahom," (storyteller 1).

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