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## Woman's Worth: The Concept of Virtue in the Education of Women in Spanish Colonial Philippines

Marya Svetlana T. Camacho

*Central to feminine institutional education in the Spanish colonial Philippines was religious and moral formation: the forging and practice of virtue as defining a woman's worth. This type of education sought to prepare girls and women for their primary social function of spouse-mother-homemaker or, to a lesser extent, for religious community life. In keeping with the feminine ideal prevalent in Hispanized societies of the period, women's education introduced new feminine values with emphasis on purity, modesty, and seclusion. Paradoxically, enclosure and the virtues consonant with it gained public transcendence on the premise that the quality of public life depended on the ethical values of its participants whose personal lives had been shaped first in the home by women.*

KEYWORDS: *women's education, moral education, virtue, colegio, beaterio, recogimiento*

Writing in the period of initial contact with inhabitants of the Philippine islands, most Spanish chroniclers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made negative remarks about the locals' sense of modesty and chastity—they were represented generally as *deshonestos* (immodest).<sup>1</sup> Although most of those authors described indigenous marriage customs and laws in a matter-of-fact way (whether or not they were compatible with Christian norms), they decried certain sexual practices as viciously unrestrained.<sup>2</sup> Observations on Tagalog and Visayan women as “lewd” and “unchaste” were made more often than analogous references to men

(Alcina 1668/2005, 420–22; Morga 1609/1961, 263, 307–9; Jocano 1975, 231; Blair and Robertson 1903–1909/1973, 3:200; Blair and Robertson 1903–1909/1973, 5:118; Hidalgo Nuchera 1995, 295; Prieto 1993, 340; Chirino 1969, 52; Colín 1658, 71). Among various feminine activities, sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century writings treated domestic tasks summarily (Alcina 1668/2005, 120, 258; Morga 1609/1961, 262–63; Jocano 1975, 229–30). Exceptional, however, was Ignacio Francisco Alcina (1668/2005, 120–22), who devoted much space to the Visayan women's dedication to weaving from childhood to old age. However, feminine attire and personal adornment invariably received considerable attention in chronicles and reports, as did the physical and moral qualities of women. Hence, side by side with laudatory observations on their industriousness and comeliness stood the forthright condemnation of their freedom of association with men and perceived sexual licentiousness.

The focus on this aspect of indigenous feminine behavior is perhaps even more revealing of the writers' early modern, European context as well as their gendered optic than of indigenous women (Brewer 2001, 33). Naturally, their description and appraisal were framed in Christian norms of morality and marriage. For example, in stark contrast with Spanish-Catholic values, virginity prior to marriage was little prized, if at all, among the Tagalog and the Visayan (Infante 1975, 61). Moreover, as Prieto (1993, 17–18) points out, the humanist interest in man led those writers to pay close attention to people and their ways, and particularly so because the Philippine cultures they encountered were utterly new to them. Understandably, the Spanish perspective interpreted aspects of indigenous culture and society in relation to natural and divine laws, to civilization or barbarity and the devil, to virtue or vice.<sup>3</sup>

Measured against the Spanish, Catholic feminine ideal, indigenous women were publicly—scandalously—deviant, an evaluation worthy of emphasis, whereas their activities at home were considered so normal as to be glossed over by most observers. For instance, authors generally noted the relatively tolerant attitude of men toward wives with extramarital relations as demonstrated by the type of sanctions husbands were prepared to accept. Yet, judging by the silence on the matter, the inverse case of an unfaithful husband did not seem to merit their attention

(Chirino 1969, 52; Blair and Robertson 1903–1909/1973, 5:115–19; Jocano 1975, 115; Brewer 2001, 45, 50).<sup>4</sup> In the encounter with indigenous women, the resulting Spanish perspective may be summarized thus: feminine functions that were centered on the family and home were considered natural and therefore fitting, while sexual conduct, which broke the barriers of feminine decency, was deemed censurable. As will be discussed further, the seriousness of the challenge posed by indigenous women was appreciated vis-à-vis the ideal of civilized life that the colonizers sought to implant in the new colony.

Chirino (1969, 52) provides a clue to the significance of the contemporary representation of indigenous women to the evangelization-colonization process: “unos de los mayores frutos que allá estimamos, es el recogimiento y honestidad de las mujeres, por ser una cosa poco usada” (one of the major fruits there that we value, is the retirement and modesty of women, which is rare). In his *Relación* (ibid., 52–53), this statement is followed by two stories of indigenous Christian women who heroically resisted attempts of seduction; these are narrated as shining testimonies of acquired Christian virtue, as success stories of evangelization. Also in this vein Chirino cites the establishment of the Colegio de Santa Potenciana, under royal patronage, upon the suggestion of the Jesuits; he sees it as an instrument of feminine education and “salvation.” Albeit referring to both sexes, Alcina (1668/2005, 422) observes some improvements in this respect, although there is yet a long way to go. It must be remembered that these changes were attempted within the larger effort to introduce the practice of Christian marriage, i.e., monogamy, and the replacement of women as religious leaders (*babaylanes* and *catalonans*) by Catholic priests. These changes also required a corresponding adjustment in masculine behavior and attitude toward feminine sexuality, a subject beyond the scope of this article. The perceived need to transform the behavioral code of indigenous women to one that derived from Christian morals doubtlessly formed part of the evangelization-colonization process. This need would configure the measures taken in this direction.

Perforce, this article takes as its starting point and backdrop the contemporary Spanish representation of prehispanic women. From the standpoint of the colonizers' Spanish, Catholic culture, a radical change

was required because the very core of its feminine ethos was contested by indigenous culture. At the heart of that ethos was a concept of virtue that is best understood in historical context, for the desired transformation necessarily involved transition issuing from the sociocultural encounter. Transculturation cannot be ignored: it would help explain the particular forms and means by which Spanish, Catholic feminine values were transmitted and adapted to Philippine conditions, which in turn engendered particular forms and practices that expressed the local understanding and application of those values.

Because this study deals with the introduction and embedding of a set of values, the definition of transculturation proposed by van Deusen (2001, 12) is useful: “the process of reshaping the tenets of one culture according to local contingencies.”<sup>5</sup> My work is much simpler in scope and method than van Deusen’s and adopts only one aspect of her analytical framework in her study of the practice of *recogimiento* in colonial Lima, as will be discussed further below. The mutual cultural influence that transculturation denotes is delineated by reference to Spanish-Christian roots, Hispanic American parallels, and contemporaneous developments, on the one hand, and, on the other, due to the limitations of sources and method, the Philippine context with its singularities to a lesser extent.

This initial study on the concept of virtue as it evolved during the colonial period by cultural interaction focuses on the institutional and normative aspects. Among the channels of transculturation of feminine virtue, this article focuses on institutional education, particularly in what would be the equivalent of boarding schools. Given that hispanization took place in a greater degree in Manila and its environs, formal education for females was largely concentrated in that area. As another starting point, the contemporary understanding and basis of gendered ethics and social norms prevalent in sixteenth-century Spain will be examined, since they provided a key optic in the representation of indigenous women in the chronicles and reports. Logically, they likewise influenced the educational forms and processes applied to colonial women.

The validity of this approach is based on the significance of ideals in any given society, oftentimes proposed as institutional goals and articulated in norms of conduct. Ideals encapsulate societal and cultural values

and therefore meanings that are widely accepted, even if not always conformed to, especially in view of the social prestige that institutions gain. This reasoning is maintained with respect to the fact that in absolute numbers the women who participated in or were directly affected by the formative activities of these institutions were few relative to the total female population of the area covered, which therefore may put in doubt whether the assimilation of the institutional values projected was widespread and deep. Institutional practice is also discussed to some extent, which in itself is likewise reflective of the ethos (its forms, content, and expressions) of representative sectors. Given the specific nature of the Philippine colony, such institutions were, from an early stage, principally for women of Spanish descent (including *mestizas*), but eventually others were established to cater to indigenous women.

There are inherent limitations to this study. First and most significant is the exclusion of a discussion of virtue of women as perceived by themselves, and their own practice of it individually and as part of collectivities; second is the incomplete rendering of the dynamics of institutional norms and practices, including the extent of assimilation and resistance to them. These limitations truncate our knowledge of the processes of transculturation. Nonetheless, they open avenues for future research. For instance, they may be progressively overcome with the use of other types of sources like notary records and court proceedings in which women's voices may be better distinguished. Another promising vein of sources is spiritual literature, like homilies and guides for confession, which Carolyn Brewer (2001) adeptly interprets.

### **The Colegio de Santa Potenciana and the Introduction of Spanish Normative Feminine Behavior**

In 1591 the governor-general, Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, reported to Philip II that he had carried out one of the instructions of 1589 given to him:

Upon arriving in said Islands, you will see how and where and with what funds a Monastery for maidens could be founded, so that those who go from Spain as well as those who will be born there may stay there, and that they may live in modesty and with sound doctrine, and

that they may leave [the monastery] to marry and so there may be propagation whereby the population may be assimilated to the land and increase, and you will look for some means with which this may be done, without touching my Treasury, or exempting it [from expenditure] as much as possible, and you will report on the first occasion, also of the way in which the aforementioned impoverished maidens may be given dowries, and how and from where smaller dowries will be constituted so that the indias may marry poor Spanish soldiers and sailors.<sup>6</sup> (Translation mine)

It was designated as a “monastery” for maidens in need of shelter with the purpose of facilitating the preservation of their honor and instruction in Catholic doctrine, traditionally regarded as prerequisites for matrimony. Ultimately, the institution of marriage contributed to the preservation of the racial elite (Sales Colín 1995, 116), in this case a fundamental need of the nascent colony. Thus, while there was openness to interracial unions, indigenous women were to marry only Spaniards from the lower military ranks.<sup>7</sup> In this document, the social importance of women, whether in theory or practice—and the protective measures ensuing from it—may be traced to their maternal role within the family. This study is interested not only in that function per se but equally in the means deemed necessary for it to be assumed successfully.

The term “monastery” naturally indicates a monastic lifestyle and thus it was for the girls of Santa Potenciana, as stated in its first regulations. These insisted that the boarding school’s chief aim was “la clausura y grande Recoximiento” (enclosure and retirement) for which entry and, for that matter, visits were highly restricted. The latter required the chaplain’s permission, and as much as possible were to take place in the parlor (*locutorio*) or by means of the revolving door (*torno*), which were typical conventual features.<sup>8</sup> In subsequent reports on the institution, the governors-general mentioned that the religious services were celebrated “con canto y tanta beneracion y aseo como si fuera un monasterio de Monjas” (with singing and so much veneration and fitting adornment as if it were a monastery of nuns) (AGI 1599; AGI 1594). This demonstration of religiosity offered a twofold benefit to Manila: the edifying example of piety and the spiritual goods obtained by prayer, both of which redounded to God’s service (AGI 1595).

The brotherhood of the Mesa de Misericordia, in the same epoch, commended the project. It was described as a “casa de recogimiento” as well as a monastery where some women and maidens lived in an exemplary fashion in strict enclosure like nuns. The place held much promise: it was where the city, i.e., Spanish inhabitants, could leave the womenfolk when necessary and entrust their daughters’ education “en toda honestidad y Virtud” (in all modesty and virtue). Consequently, they had resolved to support it (AHN 1594).

That enclosure was given utmost importance due to its quasimonastic character may be gathered not only from the above descriptions but also from the severe reprimands provoked by the breach of seclusion in the early decades of the seventeenth century. The crown ordered that the sanctions dictated by canon and civil law be applied to the guilty parties, since the case caused not only offense and scandal but, even worse, sacrilege (AGI 1620).<sup>9</sup>

In sum, Santa Potenciana offered refuge to girls and women who were conceived as vulnerable when left without sufficient male protection and supervision: enclosure as the physical characteristic of the institution addressed the danger of losing their purity, hence their honor—and their family name—and souls, if left by themselves in the world. Hence, the main beneficiaries were orphaned Spanish girls and Spanish mestizas whose fathers had distinguished themselves in the royal service, and wives of Spaniards who were either at sea or in other Spanish territories. For some of the women in Santa Potenciana, their stay there had a corrective dimension, mainly through religious exercises, aimed at reforming them toward approximating the feminine model of wife and mother (AHN 1594; AGI 1594).<sup>10</sup> The girls raised there gained in social edge; their personal status was enhanced by their possessing “proper” upbringing, thereby increasing their possibilities for marrying well, primarily, and for entering the convent, secondarily (AGI 1599; AGI 1606; AGI 1601).<sup>11</sup>

The institutional form mandated for the colegio represented a hybrid of Spanish institutions then already existing in America: a shelter for women with conventual features. The formation it offered was understood as formation in an honorable way of life anchored on religious piety. It is similar to the case of Lima where the first recogimientos catered to poor and orphaned Spanish and mestiza girls, but different from

that of New Spain where the Nahua girls were the first to be formally educated. It is very probable that the failed attempt in Mexico persuaded the crown to change tact and focus first on Spanish women.<sup>12</sup> In all these instances, the idea of *recogimiento* was interpreted by the Spanish founders as seclusion, discretion, and purity (clearly derived from a theological concept), and moral virtue denoting those same qualities that had gained currency in early modern Spain. By the mid-sixteenth century *recogimiento* had been integrated into the feminine ideal for both religious and secular women. It was practiced individually and institutionally; in the latter case, the institution would be designated as a “*recogimiento*” and the residents were called “*recogidas*” (van Deusen 2001, 7, 17–34). In effect, aside from being held as a fundamental feminine virtue, *recogimiento* configured the model set-up for female education.

The creation of Santa Potenciana reflects how the protection of Spanish women was a concern of governance early on, specifically due to the importance of transferring to the young colony a peninsular feminine ideal, which ultimately formed a key part of the social model.<sup>13</sup> Colonial society depended heavily on families; women were situated at the heart of the family, and in a crucial way were expected to play both procreative and integrative roles. Thus, paradoxically, while well-born women were generally destined to the privacy of the home, their honor transcended it in the public eye. In the case of Santa Potenciana, the ideal of womanhood was intimately linked to the preservation of a social-racial hierarchy and was constructed based on a religious-spiritual core. The rationale for the latter may be found in contemporary treatises on the education of women.

### **The Feminine Ideal According to Juan Vives and Fray Luis de León**

Santa Potenciana represented the chief values and virtues held dear by Spanish Catholicism for women. The insistence on *recato* (decency and reserve) and *recogimiento* as the primary shield of *honestidad* (modesty) and *honra* (integrity) echoed the fundamental lessons found in the more influential prescriptive literature by Spanish early modern writers. Here

I will limit myself to representative works: *Formación de la mujer cristiana* by the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives (1947a), complemented by *Deberes del marido* (1947b), published in 1523 and 1528, respectively,<sup>14</sup> and *La perfecta casada* by the Augustinian Fray Luis de León (1959), first published in 1583.

Vives sums up womanly virtue in chastity: “que la sola casta es hermosa, donairoso, dotada, noble, fecunda y toda cuanta calidad exista mejor y valiosa; y al revés, que la mujer impúdica es piélagos y abismo de los males todos” (Only the chaste is beautiful, graceful, gifted, fecund and [have] all the best and valuable qualities that may exist; and on the contrary, the unchaste woman is the deep ocean and abyss of all evil). In this respect he inherited the traditional view on women, of Judeo-Christian, Islamic as well as Greco-Roman provenance. A basic sense of shame (*vergüenza*) is the mother of modesty or reserve (*pudor*) and temperance in thought, word, and deed. Modesty guards against anger, envy, and boastfulness, while sobriety or temperance fosters continence, economy, and frugality, which are key virtues for running the household. Corporal temperance—vigilance over the senses—positively affects the soul in such a way that the passions are kept under control, thus facilitating good works and the acquisition of upright knowledge. Purity finds its root almost entirely in the soul, from which all the virtues spring. Virginity of the body is nothing if the soul is contaminated. In this view, it is necessary to strengthen the soul so that the body may remain inviolate. Hence, chastity may be equated to personal integrity.

In accordance with this thinking, the chief concern of parents in rearing daughters is to keep them away from impurity and vice, particularly through the custody of the senses, “puesto que no la queremos tan docta como honesta y buena” (since we do not want her learned as much as virtuous and good). The learning they are to acquire should be designed to mold them in virtuous living. Idleness being the biggest enemy of virtue, great care is to be taken to keep them busy in honorable occupations; as such, this is a question of temperance.

In order to preserve this primordial virtue and be shielded from the malicious judgment of society, a woman is to venture into public space only on indispensable occasions. When she does, she should be well armed, that is, by keeping her senses, imagination, and curiosity in check;

her conversations with males prudently short, and her attire decent. The golden norm for feminine conduct runs as follows: “Retraída debe estar la mujer y ser conocida de pocos. Indicio es de castidad no entera y de reputación menoscabada ser conocida de los más” (The woman should be reserved and known by few. A sign of damaged chastity and tarnished reputation is to be known by many).

The prized virtue of a married woman is identical to the maiden’s. Although Vives articulates a deep love for the husband as forming a tandem with female chastity, these two are bound up since that exclusive love is born out of, and sustained at the same time, by chastity. In *Deberes del marido*, Vives comes full circle when he states that the virtue of religion or piety covers all the other virtues. As if taking for granted that readers would understand the reasons for the premium given to purity in mind and body, Vives mentions only in passing the grave consequences of a wife’s infidelity, i.e., offspring. It subverts the patriarchal order, that is, the preservation not only of lineage but also of domestic well-being, which constitutes the wife’s principal charge.

In keeping with society’s assumptions, conveyed by Vives, the fundamental tasks God and nature assigned to women are wifeness and maternity, and concomitantly domestic governance. Although man and woman share a rational nature and equally need moral education, the woman is perceived to be ambiguous and easily swayed. All this is in congruence with the traditional conception of woman’s essential weakness relative to man, and therefore her dependence on him (as father and husband).

While Vives deals with women in different states in life (i.e., single, married, and widowed), Fray Luis de León writes solely about the *perfecta casada* (the perfect wife) in his commentary on the ninth and last chapter of the book of Proverbs, illustrating and praising the “woman of worth.” It should be noted that León writes about the wife in the rural setting where she is expected to participate actively in the management of household economic affairs. Although he talks mainly about the married woman, his work cannot but imply the proper upbringing of women who would eventually become wives and mothers. Both authors share the concept that women are by nature destined to the private space of the home, while men to public affairs. As León puts it, “Como son

los hombres para lo público, así las mujeres para el encerramiento; y como es de los hombres el hablar y salir a la luz, así de ellas el encerrarse y encubrirse” (As men are for public affairs, women are for seclusion; and as it is for men to speak and come out in public, so women are meant to be shut away and hidden). This division of roles stems from the notion regarding the inherent weakness of women who need an extraordinary degree of virtue to successfully undertake the serious enterprise of running a household and complementing the work of the husband. Anything less than that is tantamount to mediocrity—“no es buena la que no es más que Buena” (she who is simply good is not good)—whereas for a man an average level of virtue is sufficient to carry out his diverse tasks. Thus, following on the sharply differentiated nature and work of the two sexes, the demands on females are higher. León adumbrates the intervention of divine assistance to attain the requirements of the feminine mission. This almost “heroic” virtue makes of the wife that woman of great value spoken of in Scripture, transforming her into a treasure with which any husband, and for that matter any household, may consider himself wealthy. Ultimately, a woman of this caliber is the only being who can bring happiness to a man. According to chapter nine of Proverbs, on the basis of divinely ordained order, the fundamental feminine virtues are situated in the domestic sphere; for this she must count on a good reserve of temperance, industriousness, discretion, and mildness, all predicated on her being God-fearing.

These two authors, representative of the early modern period, quite clearly convey the public-private divide corresponding to the dichotomy between masculinity and femininity that dominated Western social standards for centuries and characterized the Iberian and American worlds (Lavrin 1978, 16). The social model was founded on marriage and the family, and in turn the family on women. Their naturally assigned locus was physically and morally the home. While on the males fell the responsibility of material sustenance and passing on the family name, which might be in conjunction with their involvement in public affairs, the women’s duty focused on the home and family. Thus, what might be construed as gender asymmetry—woman’s dependence on man—would also have to be considered in terms of complementarity. In this framework the premium placed on personal integrity of the female family

members, based on chastity and its companion virtues, may be comprehended best.

However, reality did not always conform to the ideals just presented. As in any stage in history, tension existed between societal ideals and actual behavior, i.e., approximation or deviation from the standards, among certain individuals and sectors more than others. The strength of ideals is thereby tested through time. Due to the limitations mentioned above, the dynamics of reinforcement and revision through time is examined here mainly from the angle of norms and of the institutions that sought to embody and transmit those ideals.

### **The Beaterios**

Beginning in the late seventeenth century the *beaterio*<sup>15</sup> became the institutional heir to the model pioneered by Santa Potenciana. As reinforcement to the latter, the Colegio de Santa Isabel, established by the brotherhood of the Misericordia, began to operate in 1634. While Santa Potenciana had begun early on to admit women with moral and marital problems, albeit in separate quarters to minimize their contact with the *educandas* (students), Santa Isabel was founded to cater strictly to respectable orphaned Spanish and mestiza girls (Mesquida 2005, 130–38). In short, it was an attempt to preserve what the other colegio had as its original purpose. All these institutions held in common basic goals, values, and praxes. Nonetheless, the beaterios distinguished themselves from the two oldest schools for girls, having been created for primordial religious ends from which educational objectives naturally evolved.

By its very nature, the beaterio embodied the constituent values of the feminine ideal: piety, seclusion, modesty, chastity, and industriousness. The accounts of the early development of these pious houses invariably tell how the first followers of the foundresses were attracted to the practice of those virtues in a space largely isolated from the secular world. The crown strictly followed its Philippine policy of limiting female convents to that founded by the Poor Clares (exclusive to Spanish women during most part of its existence) in view of the circumstances of the colony. In fact, in the eighteenth century it was reluctant to grant formal beaterio status to some pious female communities in Manila and Pasig

that were already popularly called as such. Instead it insisted on maintaining them as *recogimientos*,<sup>16</sup> thereby keeping their secular condition while capitalizing on their educational activity. The fact that some were founded by and for indigenous women demonstrates the attainment of a level of assimilation of the religious values and feminine virtues that the *beaterio* served, radically different from the prehispanic ethos. At the same time, the stories of those determined women reflect a deep religiosity whose genealogy could be traced to centuries past.<sup>17</sup> Despite administrative difficulties encountered, the peak of development of these communities took place in that century.

In accordance with the terminology of the times, I shall designate these institutions as *beaterios* and *recogimientos* interchangeably as these terms were indistinctively applied to them. To understand this in context, it would help to remember that the *beaterio* was a venue for the institutional practice of *recogimiento*. Their reputation as *beaterios*, even without formal status as such, stemmed from the fact that *beatas*—celibate women devoted to pious practices and asceticism following a rule of the third order, usually taking simple vows—founded and ran them. Strictly speaking, *beaterios* had a pious nature and end without enjoying canonical status, while *recogimientos*, legally, had a markedly secular character. Nevertheless, in the cultural milieu of Spanish colonies, they shared a secluded, quasimonastic lifestyle, marked by acts of piety deemed proper for women. Hence, from the public's standpoint, they were merged into a single pious category. As *recogimientos* these houses had three groups of *recogidas*: the *beatas* themselves; the other women who voluntarily lived in the community; and the girls, many of them orphans, entrusted to the *beatas* for education. According to their respective state in life, they adopted the *beaterio* way of life in varying degrees of rigor.

Three of the five houses took on a more pronounced religious character in terms of constitutions and lifestyle: Santa Catalina under the Dominicans; the *beaterio de la Compañía* originally guided by the Jesuits (hence, its adopted name) and eventually by the archbishop of Manila; and San Sebastián de Calumpang under the Recollects. Although Santa Catalina professed an educational mission from the moment of its foundation, the *Compañía* and San Sebastián took it on almost as a matter of course. The educational dimension is inserted to a varying

extent in their respective constitutions and rules. In contrast, the communities of Pasig founded by the Augustinian Fr. Felix Trillo and of the Dominican tertiary Madre Paula de la Santísima Trinidad had a patently secular character. Their formative objective issued from the accepted sociocultural function of the beaterio in the Hispanic world.<sup>18</sup> Not only was the beatas' religious devotion edifying to the public, as consistently acknowledged by civil and religious authorities, but devotional impact was also achieved by direct transmission to the educandas and wards. Intertwined with instruction in the faith was basic literacy and formation in religious piety and virtuous and urbane living, i.e., "buenas costumbres," and, with the latter, a certain level of skill in domestic tasks.<sup>19</sup> Although the number of girls and women who benefited from beaterio instruction and upbringing was evidently small compared with the total female population, the social value of the beaterio-recogimiento educational model quickly took root as evidenced by the eminent family background of many students. By the nineteenth century, their identity and prestige as educational institutions were firmly established.<sup>20</sup>

As the *fiscal* of the Council of Indies commented regarding the beaterio de la Compañía, "estas casas solo tiene objeto de recoger y adoctrinar en la fe a indias doncellas, y otras cosas para la vida política (por maestras), para que luego vayan a las provincias donde enseñan la lengua española, y en ella, la doctrina cristiana, oraciones" (These houses only have the object of providing shelter and doctrine to indigenous maidens, and other things for civil life so that later they may go out to the provinces to teach the Spanish language and Christian doctrine and prayers in that language) (AGI 1761). This translates the spirit of the law 19, title iii, book I of the *Recopilación de las leyes de Indias*, which was applied consistently as the chief criterion for assessing the status of beaterios in Manila. For the civil authorities, this law defined the nature and end of those communities; for the latter, it was a major empirical outcome of their existence.

In this context, Mother Paula's mission proved congruent with the crown's position at the outset. Among the positive points of her recogimiento that the Audiencia observed was the instructional program given in Spanish, aside from the variety of girls who benefited from the school, the teaching of Christian doctrine, and the practice of devotions

(AGI 1769a). Upon the death of Mother Paula, her successor reported that among the educational results of her school were girls who had returned to their respective provinces where they served as teachers or at least gave good example in their ambit (AGI 1783). With this the main objective of the beaterio was accomplished. The feminine teaching function encouraged by the crown was not necessarily exercised by women in formal schools but many times in the home, inherent in their tasks as mother, grandmother, aunt, or sister. Earlier, Fr. Trillo had established the Pasig recogimiento for women who were desirous of retiring from the world as well as for the education of indigenous girls by those same women. Santa Catalina's foundational organization manifested its original aim of forming girls, Spaniard and non-Spaniard alike: fifteen Spanish beatas to take as many as eighty poor girls under their tutelage.

The development of the Philippine beaterios, as in Spanish America, happened when they were on the wane in Spain.<sup>21</sup> A major difference in colonial society was its multiracial character, with which the beaterios had to deal. More than discrimination, what was evident in a certain degree was ethnic segregation: Santa Catalina was meant to have Spanish and mestiza beatas but educandas could be of any ethnicity; the beaterio de la Compañía and San Sebastián had non-Spaniards as foundresses and first followers; the recogimiento of Pasig was intended for indigenous women from Manila's environs. The foundational criteria on the ethnic background of the beatas in each house were maintained during the Spanish period. However, given the community life of these institutions, it may be presumed that through the educational activity a degree of racial integration was attained, which might not have taken place outside the beaterio walls. Although records show the multiracial composition of students—albeit in accordance with contemporary usage, they continued to be classified by race—in Santa Catalina (“de todos los colores”), la Compañía, Pasig, and Madre Paula's recogimiento, the details as to the degree to which scholastic life was interracial are scarcely known. Former students of Madre Paula's school acknowledged that she treated girls equally regardless of ethnic or social background (AGI 1769b). Some friction must have occurred in the beaterio de la Compañía, where a beata remarked it would be better not to admit many Spanish girls as some had proved to be troublesome (ARVM 1855).<sup>22</sup> These are glimpses

of the daily interaction that took place in these communities, and there is nothing yet conclusive regarding the extent to which they affected interracial relations.

Having developed after the council of Trent,<sup>23</sup> the Philippine beaterios were established with reclusion as a key characteristic, in a way reinforcing the prevalent idea that women should have minimal participation in public affairs, if at all. Like the convents that were allowed to take in girls for education, the beaterios undertook the same task in Manila. As mentioned above, their continuance was approved by the secular authorities as instruments of feminine education, which was scarcely implemented elsewhere before the nineteenth century, since public instruction in the archipelago at that time was limited to parochial instruction for boys and girls.

Aside from this acknowledged social significance of those pious houses, the protagonism of women in the establishment of recogimientos, more so when they did not belong to the racial elite, signified that they possessed sufficient spiritual vigor to initiate another form of religious life.<sup>24</sup> As a necessary support for their spiritual enterprise, they engaged in economic activity, albeit on a much smaller scale than the male religious orders. In itself this was an assertion of female independence—still under the auspices of ecclesiastical authorities and male religious orders—while keeping within the occupational limits set for women of those times.

### **The Recogimiento of Pasig: A Glimpse of the Conditions of Indigenous Women**

Among the recogimientos, that which was located in Pasig had ostensibly greater contact with the indigenous population because it was situated outside Manila.<sup>25</sup> A closer look at its purposes and perceived benefits might reveal conditions particularly affecting indigenous women, i.e., *indias* and *mestizas*, during the eighteenth century, which the recogimiento purportedly sought to address. The parish priest of the town of Pasig, the Augustinian Fr. Felix Trillo, justified the existence and continuance of the pious house for local women that he had founded in 1740 as a remedy for their current state of “doctrinal ignorance and

moral laxity.” Indeed, the first recogidas who had initiated the recogimiento with Fr. Trillo’s support sought a secluded life in the manner of beatas.

Fr. Trillo’s description of the lay pious house affords a glimpse of certain local circumstances that affected women in relation to social standards set for them (AGI c.1753). The first pertained to marriage: preparation to assume matrimonial duties and the freedom to marry, which could be violated by parents obliging children to marry (the spouse of the parents’ choice) or denying them consent unreasonably.<sup>26</sup> The second had to do with the concept of a well-educated woman: that is, a Christian woman, as exemplified by the women living in the recogimiento. Fr. Trillo’s claim that parents entrusted their daughters to the beatas indicated appreciation for the feminine model that the community projected. The third referred to reformative measures applied to the “*inquietas y escandalosas*” (restless and scandalous), traits opposed to the prevailing feminine ideal of domesticity and discretion. The fourth and fifth—which Trillo as a spiritual pastor considered the most important—highlighted the means to cultivate the spiritual life and knowledge of Christian teachings, hence, the means to salvation. After all, the virtue of religion anchored on doctrine provided the base for the other objectives.

In the same period the archbishop made a recommendation regarding this institution in which he underlined the education—in the faith and for work—it offered to indigenous women, which effectively prepared them to marry “with the stability and firmness that virtues and good habits bring” (AGI 1753a). In his turn, the adviser of the governor-general even encouraged his superior to issue an order to all provinces to establish a recogimiento in their respective capitals where women could learn to govern not only themselves, that is to say, their passions, but also the household economy; these women would sow the good seed of “civilized life.” In these places, fathers absent for reasons of work could leave their daughters in good hands. The same government official added that these girls would then be in a better position to marry Spaniards, who often chose Chinese mestizas. Lastly, such houses would keep women’s virtue intact, and consequently the family’s good name, “*porque una muger mala es el naufragio del Varon un cautiverio*

de la Vida una tempestad de la Casa” (because a bad woman is the shipwreck of man, life’s captivity, a tempest in the home) (AGI 1754b). The moral plight of women was also ascribed to a demographic circumstance. According to Fr. Trillo and the Manila city council, indigenous women generally outnumbered men; although they did not elaborate on the moral consequences of this phenomenon, it may be presumed that such an imbalance led to a higher incidence of concubinage (AGI c.1753; AGI 1753b). A *recogimiento*, therefore, would provide an alternative living space for females as well as an honorable state of life outside marriage.

The range of social functions invested in the *recogimiento* in this particular case does not differ greatly from its Manila counterparts. In the colonial social code, the responsibilities of women in marriage and family life were basically homogenous, regardless of position. Nuances appear in gender relationships between classes—as suggested by the aforementioned comment on the enhanced position of the Chinese *mestizas* raised in the *recogimiento*—and more obviously in the expected contribution to the household income (i.e., the lower the socioeconomic levels, the greater the expectations in this regard). The women who lived in the Pasig *recogimiento* and devoted themselves to spiritual exercises and teaching acquired the *beata* status especially if they chose to take a simple vow of chastity and follow the rule of St. Augustine for *tercianas*. This is a clear example of indigenous female religious expression in the Baroque spirit in the Philippine colonial context. However, the social impact that found favor in the eyes of locals and civil officials, in consonance with Fr. Trillo’s averred objectives, consisted in shoring up Christian matrimony through the moral and spiritual preparation of women and protecting them from coercion. These institutional aims mirrored both the perceived pivotal role of women within the family as wives and mothers, and outside of it as school teachers, as well as their vulnerability to parental authority. (Up to what extent these views represented gender perspective may not be as important as the fact that local authorities were concerned with preparing women for matrimonial responsibilities; was there a parallel concern regarding men?) In this light, the *recogimiento* served to remedy the tension between the Christian idea of matrimony as freely contracted and the politics of marriage. It

provided another existential option for women from which to negotiate with existing societal standards, that is, to imbibe or to resist them.<sup>27</sup> The exercise of parental authority in the choice of spouse was common to Spanish and indigenous traditions. The new issue facing the hispanizing efforts was the feminine ideal applied to marriage. Lastly, the demographic imbalance would introduce another factor in the social dynamics affecting this female institution. In sum, although the aforementioned functions were not entirely alien to Spanish and American counterparts, the Pasig *recogimiento* sought to address local social conditions impacting on women.

### **The Reglamentos of the Colegios: Articulating the Feminine Ideal**

The *reglamentos*<sup>28</sup> or regulations of the colegios set forth institutional ideals and goals, the latter being more explicitly expressed than the former. The goals may be summarized as Christian education, which consisted in the fulfillment of religious duties, the practice of virtue, preparation for domestic governance, and the acquisition of urbanity and “habits of education.” The ideals may be gathered from the governance method and lifestyle promoted in the school, usually laid out in great detail.

Until the advent of the normal schools and those admitting day students in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the colegio was conceived and consequently constructed as a space withdrawn from the secular world. It was designed to be an almost self-contained community, highly hierarchical and regimented. The organizational set-up followed that of the religious orders that governed most of them; hence, the virtue of obedience occupied a primordial place. Indeed, order, in tandem with the fulfillment of duty, articulated the lifestyle of the school, as manifested in the insistence on the respect for authority and common schedule. Pious practices marked the rhythm of each day of the year, punctuated by liturgical celebrations. Discipline took different modes, to mention major manifestations: the enforced isolation from the outside world for which all forms of external communication was monitored; the humble acceptance of corrections from superiors; modesty in thought,

word, and deed; learning by memorization and repetition. In consonance with the conception of education in virtue, there were many regulations stated in binary terms: industriousness versus idleness, simplicity and sobriety as against frivolity and vanity, refinement and decency as opposed to vulgarity. It may be discerned that suffusing the rules is the catch-all virtue of charity, which regulates personal relationships with the divine and the human. However, the regulations generally did not hesitate to descend to particulars by admonishing against favoritism, gossip, envy, and bickering. In sum, the ideal was moral integrity, anchored on the fear of God, and nurtured in isolation from its antithesis, that is, the “world” as the site of temptation. This was considered as the best preparation for vicissitudes in the “real world.”

Before the updating of colegio rules in the nineteenth century, a great deal of space was devoted to “house rules” with hardly any mention of the curriculum. Even in the revised rules the emphasis remained to be the practice of virtues underpinning the duties and responsibilities of administrators, teachers, and students alike. This reflected the utmost importance given to moral education in practical terms vis-à-vis academic or “literary” education. Instruction in the faith was partly catechetical and mostly applied through devotions and pious practices. Reading was taught mainly as ancillary to religious education; because writing was not crucial to this endeavor, it received uneven attention. The womanly arts (“*labores proprias de su sexo*”) were given a good share of the daily schedule, sometimes exercised simultaneously with religious instruction. In some colegios, students took turns working in the kitchen or engaging in other domestic tasks as part of their training for future responsibilities, and as an antidote to idleness and pride.

This educational program corresponded to the prevalent idea of feminine nature: it was predominantly concerned with the education of the heart and will; the scant attention to intellectual education was focused on religious doctrine with the aim of consolidating piety and virtue. Pilar Bailarín (1989, 252), referring to the condition of homebound women in nineteenth-century Spain, concludes that in the home, being predominantly female space, thus the locus of religiosity, “men remained subordinated in the moral order since balance and familial happiness were the results of female behavior.” This sort of

education served the prevailing social functions of the wife as the “heart” of the home while the husband was the “head”: she provided moral support to the husband, governed the domestic economy, and imparted to the children the skills of basic literacy and their earliest religious and moral education. Increasingly, however, this imbalance would be the subject of criticism and reform. In the nineteenth century the academic subjects were increased to constitute roughly half of the subject matter, aimed at developing literacy skills at a higher level; nevertheless, religious-ethical formation remained a fundamental part as reflected by the inclusion of classes on private and social morals and sacred history.<sup>29</sup>

The landmark reform of 1863 conceptualized an expanded basic academic program (Anon. 1887, 16). The curriculum in normal schools covered a greater number of academic subjects (Gainza 1877, 106–9),<sup>30</sup> parallel to the curriculum for the normal schools for men; nonetheless, needlework was kept as a significant part of the curriculum for girls and concurrently of teacher training.

Although the range of academic subjects increased, religious and moral education persisted as the keystone of basic education for both sexes.<sup>31</sup> In this regard, Spanish educational philosophy, like policy, continued to be echoed in the Philippines.<sup>32</sup> The manual of education for those taking the examinations for teachers clearly stated that the reason for this was that kind of education that provided a person with the knowledge of his ultimate goal in life and the means to attain it. Moral education was inseparable from religious instruction, for only Christian morals sometimes had the strength to oblige. Even aesthetic education focused on God as its sublime reference point because he is absolute beauty. On the practical side, education consisted of the development of virtue and was nourished by pious practices and urbanity in the church. Along this line, it was advised that the abstract virtue of justice that regulated the moral life was best learned through the concrete duties to God and fellow human beings (Anon. 1890, 7, 29–43). The very task of education was considered as participation in God’s work—Christ is the supreme teacher—in nurturing God-given talent (*ibid.*, 2).

There is a clear continuity in the lifestyle as well as the values transmitted by the colegios from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century.

This is not surprising since most of them were run by beaterios and in fact continued to be called beaterios; in the case of Santa Potenciana and Santa Isabel, they were following tradition. Some distinction must be made between the life of the *internas* and *externas*, the former being more intensely regimented.<sup>33</sup> However, the goal of turning out Christian women, noted for their “recato y honestidad” (Anon. 1866, tit. 4, art. 50) both inside and outside school, permeated the education of all types of students in private and public schools.

## Conclusion

The early modern Spanish, Catholic conception of women emphasized the value of corporeality as an integral part of feminine virtue: purity and modesty based on self-control and bolstered by religious piety. Purity pertained to body and spirit; it regulated relations with men as well as with self, in and outside matrimony by way of spousal fidelity and virginity. Modesty guarded purity; enclosure, in principle, protected both. These values framed the colonizers’ view on indigenous women, who logically appeared to them as sorely deficient in feminine virtue. In prehispanic society, the “natural” calling of women was marriage. Sexual relations could take place within or outside marriage and were not necessarily linked to maternity. The feminine ethos of the colonial order introduced new values: virginity before marriage, sexual relations and thereby maternity only within monogamous marriage, and celibacy as a state in life whether in a secular or religious milieu. Effecting discontinuity in the feminine behavioral code took place while maintaining continuity in the woman’s traditional domestic responsibilities, as indigenous and Spanish cultures shared the way everyday tasks were distributed between men and women. Chronicles and reports offered only glimpses of measures taken or of achievements in the task of transforming feminine ethos in the new colony, in the same way that they devoted relatively little space to indigenous women.

The institutional vehicles of the new ethos—both in its transformational and conservative aspects—were the colegios and beaterios, which became its most visible expressions. They became the spatial enforcer of

the key virtues of *honestidad*, *recato*, *piedad*—which may be summed up as *recogimiento*—and their companion virtues of *sobriedad* and *industria*, articulated by early modern Spanish moralists and perpetuated by tradition. The institutional practice of *recogimiento* became a major means as well as symbol of the Spanish, Catholic feminine ideal. The degree of acceptance of the normative behavior for women may be gleaned from the continuance of these institutions as centers of education where, in the course of the centuries, it became the usual practice for daughters of elite families to be interned. Feminine education was considered mainly as preparation for marriage via the inculcation of values and skills intended to strengthen family life and the education of children; likewise, it was a natural introduction to the religious life of the *beata* and the nun. Enclosure might seem to contradict the end of life in the world, but in that cultural-religious context it obeyed the logic of *recogimiento* applicable to women who valued *honestidad*. Following the same logic, *recogimiento* would seem to have been feasible only to women of privileged socioeconomic rank, who did not need to engage in work outside the home and who stayed in boarding schools. Nonetheless, *recogimiento* was not only an institutional practice but a feminine value comprising many virtues, and therefore could be assimilated and lived individually outside the walls of a *beaterio* or *colegio*; the extent to which this actually happened would be a postscript to this study.

A significant break with the prehispanic past was the substitution of women as community religious leaders by the male hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The feminine religious role shifted to the realm of piety—still closely linked to *recogimiento*—which in the Western perspective was considered “natural” to women, complementary to their inherent weakness. Women’s piety in the home benefited the early religious-moral education of the children, which was entrusted to them. However, feminine spirituality found particular expression in the *beatas*; thus, in a different way and with a different character compared with the priestesses of old, indigenous women gained public recognition as religious figures. When they formed communities, these were distinguished for their life of religious devotion led in accordance with the new Spanish, Catholic values of seclusion and celibacy. There is a big gap

to fill to be able to trace the continuity from the female religious protagonism in prehispanic culture to that in colonial times, which Brewer and other authors have posited.

The creation of institutions for women became an important means of transculturation. Early on, the Colegio de Santa Potenciana established the prototype of *recogimiento* as an institution and practice, albeit intended for young women of Spanish descent. As the only institution for women in that early period, it also became the venue where “education” meant instilling normative conduct in women by way of providing shelter to married women or reforming the deviant. As mentioned above, the foundation of *beaterios* by indigenous women in the late seventeenth up to the first half of the eighteenth century demonstrated the assimilation of the feminine ideal and identification with social norms rooted in that ideal. The multiracial character of these communities likewise revealed how the Spanish institutional model was adapted to the peculiarities of Philippine colonial society. If Santa Potenciana and Santa Isabel had adjusted to the inevitable phenomenon of *mestizaje*, the *beaterios* opened their doors to the social spectrum in varying degrees of inclusivity, and created their respective interracial dynamics. Like Santa Potenciana, they were multifunctional in response to perceived local needs and according to local circumstances: they served as places for spiritual development; shelter and Christian education (especially of orphans and widows); and discipline (of wives with ongoing litigation and erring women). Only in the eighteenth century, for example, would a separate correctional institution for women be established, reflecting the increasing involvement of the civil government in regulating public morality. The *recogimiento* of Pasig, among other things, was an asylum for young women being forced into marriage. Until the early nineteenth century, education meant religious instruction, the inculcation of virtues, and training in literacy and domestic skills. By the middle of that century, the curriculum was expanded to include more academic subjects, with the object of equipping women to be better mothers and to multiply the number of teachers to implement the legislated educational reforms. Thus, these institutions served to define the feminine ideal both by the types of women they admitted and the functions they assumed.

In the paradigm of colonial society in which monogamous marriage was the basis of family, the virtuous woman—according to the Spanish, Catholic ethos—represented the pillar of family stability. Ideally, women's purity and fidelity constituted a fundamental part of the family's honor; consequently, it had to be nurtured and protected by the male members of the family and by the practice of *recogimiento*. Women's piety, long regarded as natural to women, was the bedrock of the family's spiritual and moral well-being. Since the most intimate site of personal life—with repercussions on public affairs—was female domain, feminine virtue and literacy played a major role in ensuring the quality of that space. The asymmetrical relationship between men and women in marriage and family may otherwise be viewed from the point of view of complementarity, which was not radically different from prehispanic domestic organization. In the Hispanized world, demands were made on women to be exemplary in Christian virtue, more than to be learned. The well-being of society was predicated on the moral fiber of its women. What might otherwise be interpreted as repression was invisible protagonism in establishing the colonial social order and in evangelization.

## Notes

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1. The Jesuit missionary Pedro Chirino (1969, 20) exceptionally praises the modesty of Visayan clothing, as compared with other peoples.

2. Carolyn Brewer's (2001) study makes an important contribution to our knowledge of how indigenous women were represented in the various Spanish narratives from the period of contact. Using a feminist, postmodern lens, she examines them from the point of view of gender: how they were "constructed" in the narratives and "reconstructed" through hegemonic processes used by the Spaniards. To round off, she deals with the resistance of women to these changes. A key conclusion that she makes is that the effect of Christianization on sexual morals, that is, restricting sexual activity to monogamous marriage, was "to reconstitute women on the underside of men." The introduction and accep-

tance of the notions of “virginity,” “adultery,” and moderation of sexual pleasure presupposed a radical change in the behavior of indigenous women (ibid., 51). Crucial to this process was implantation of the new paradigm, the dichotomy between good and bad women based on the degree to which they exhibited chaste conduct (ibid., 67, 78). Another radical change effected was the demise of feminine shamans as evangelization advanced.

I make use of Brewer’s work for the pioneering groundwork it has accomplished with regard to the primary sources on the subject matter, subjected to a careful gendered reading. However, the optic of gender politics predominates the work, and I do not wish to limit myself to that when dealing with a fundamentally ethical content that cannot be duly captured from that perspective alone. Neither does the perspective of religious symmetry that the author uses suffice for my subject matter. According to that view, Christian morals would have the same validity as other belief systems’ ethical norms. Coupled with religious symmetry, Brewer uses a hegemonic framework in which other significant dimensions of agency, such as religious faith and intentionality of missionaries, are ignored or even distorted. This in a way decontextualizes the specific Christianization process of the colonial period. At the same time, there are instances in which the very framework of symmetry is contradicted, particularly when Christian sexual morals are characterized negatively relative to animism’s; Brewer assumes certain ethical standards drawn from the contested area of sexuality and gender of postmodernity, and consequently criticizes the process of Christianization, its rationale as well as its results.

3. As an example of the differentiation that the missionaries made between the order of nature and that of Christian faith, Alcina (1668/2005) makes a distinction between “vices of nature” or weaknesses of human nature (among them, sloth and sensuality/lust) that he describes as prevalent among the Visayans, and sin per se.

4. A possible explanation for this silence is the practice of polygyny in some areas, as Chirino (1969) mentions, by which having relations with more than one woman evidently would not constitute infidelity on the part of the husband.

5. Van Deusen (2001) traces the origin of the term to the Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz who coined it in 1940 to replace *acculturation*. The new word emphasizes the mutual influences between cultures over time.

6. Article 27 of “Instrucciones reservadas,” Real Cédula, 9 Aug. 1589, runs thus: “Llegado a las dhas Yslas mirareis como y donde, y con que dotacion se podria fundar un Monasterio de Doncellas recogidas, para que lo esten alli, asi las que fueren de aca, como las que allá nacieren, y vivan honestamente y con Buena doctrina, y salgan para casarse y haya propagacion, mediante lo cual, y naturalizandose en la tierra, se aumente siempre la poblacion, y procurareis buscar alguna traza o arbitrio con que esto se haga, sin tocar mi Hacienda, o relevandola todo lo posible, y avisareis en la primer ocasion, y tambien de la

orden que se podrá dar para dotar a las dichas doncellas pobres, y como y de donde se constituirán otras dotes menores para que indias se casen con soldados pobres españoles y marineros" (AHN 1589).

7. Article 27 of the Instructions of 1589 does not specify race, only "las que fueren de aca, como las que allá nacieren." This phrase describing place of origin may be interpreted in two ways: firstly, Spanish girls born in Spain and those born in the islands, and, secondly, Spaniards born in Spain and indigenous girls. However, the former makes better sense because it makes the customary differentiation between Spanish girls born in the islands and those born in the motherland; in the given historical context this was an important distinction (criollos vis-à-vis peninsulars). Besides, if it were the latter interpretation, the racial terms, *españolas* and *indias*, would have been used as they appear in the latter part of the article. But the term *indias* appears only in the last line, with no clear reference to an antecedent in the same passage. Furthermore, the distinction made between the dowries for the *colegialas* of Santa Potenciana and other smaller dowries for *indias* reinforces the impression that the latter are not included in the first group (*colegialas*). What is clear from the last line is that there are two sets of maidens who are in need of dowries to be able to marry well, i.e., according to their social status. Certainly, by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the criterion of Spanish descent is unambiguously established.

Only Chirino (1969, 53) so far hints that there were *indias* in Santa Potenciana. His *Relación* covers roughly the first decade of Santa Potenciana's existence: he notes that there were almost 100 *doncellas*, "las más hijas de Españoles." His assertion may be interpreted to mean that the majority was made up of full-blooded Spaniards and the rest were girls of mixed descent (*mestizas*), or that the majority were girls of Spanish descent, whether by both parents or one, and the rest were *indigenes*. However, subsequent correspondence from the local authorities and entities (dating from the late 1590s and the first two decades of the 1600s), reflecting royal approval of the institution, as well as the colegio's constitutions of 1691, mention that the *colegialas* were pure Spanish or *mestizas*. The discrepancy might be bridged in two ways: first, if the first sense of Chirino's description is accepted, and, second, if the second sense is upheld, the criteria of admission to Santa Potenciana might have evolved so that the institution soon became exclusively for girls of Spanish descent. I contest, in agreement with Sales (1995), that Santa Potenciana was meant to preserve the ranks of girls of Spanish descent. With this, the question as to what similar educational efforts were devoted for indigenous girls in the early decades of the colonial period remains.

8. This is taken from the first item of a manuscript that appears to be a draft of the constitutions of 1591 drawn up during the term of Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas (AHN 1591).

For the Philippines, Luciano Santiago (2005) has put together and summarized several of his articles in a book on the history of female religious congregations, some of which started out as beaterios. To date, it is the most complete study on this topic. As an example of a historiographical work about a single beaterio, see López (1999).

16. Note that *recogimiento* here denotes an institution. Borges (1992, 309) explains the three major functions entrusted to these institutions: first, as a group of women who retired to their own house or women who wanted to safeguard their moral condition from a matrimonial situation, i.e., husband's prolonged absence, abandonment or maltreatment by the same, and ongoing separation proceedings; second, to reform one's previously immoral life; and, third, to educate girls. In the last case, when in the care of *beatas*, the community was likewise referred to as a *beaterio*. Since this article deals with education, it is concerned with the third function and only tangentially deals with the other two.

17. For a preliminary study of this "genealogy," see Ferraris (1983) and Santiago (2005).

18. See Borges (1992, 309), Muriel (1992, 246–51), and Gonzalbo (1987, 166). MÓ and Rodríguez (2005, 737) cite Kathryn Burns's study on the *beaterios* for indigenous girls in colonial Cuzco, Peru. She concludes that the education imparted reinforced the Christian identity of those institutions and their benefactors by instilling the feminine ideal in the students. This was parallel to the process followed in convents where Spanish girls were interned. Thus, educational activity served to confirm the intersecting values of status, honor, and religiosity in colonial society.

19. These were the same basic skills taught to girls in New Spain at home and in school; see Muriel (1982, 494–98).

20. In different nineteenth-century publications containing descriptions of Manila and of educational institutions, the five houses covered in this article are invariably referred to as *beaterios*. A well-known example is the biweekly periodical *Ilustración Filipina*. In the 15 September 1860 issue it featured the cover article entitled "Educandas de los Beaterios." Aside from outlining the history of each institution, it describes the distinctive lifestyle of the boarding students and their attire. The same issue features a colored plate depicting one such student. Since the *Ilustración Filipina* is known to feature Philippine "types," the *educanda* of the beaterio is treated here as one of them. This image survives up to the present in its linguistic and visual aspects. It was shared by John Bowring (1963, 118–19), a British who visited Manila in the same period, who observed, "It is said there is scarcely a family of respectability in Manila that has not one daughter at least in a beaterio." The situation of these institutions is given in the 1842 report of Sinibaldo de Más (1843, 7–13), and in the *Guía de Forasteros* of different years.

Pilar Gonzalbo (1995, 429) points out that in Mexico, between the *colegios* or *recogimientos* and convents, there was little difference in terms of lifestyle and teaching practice, and that families appreciated the respectable image conferred by these institutions on the girls.

21. For comparison, see the description and analysis of the proliferation of *beaterios* in Lima in a slightly earlier period by van Deusen (2001, 139–42).

22. This 1885 manuscript is a copy of the original, then kept in the archive of the *beaterio*, made by the mother superior Mariana de Leon.

23. The constitution *Circa pastoralis* (1566) ordered a stricter observance of female monastic enclosure, which the Council of Trent had disposed, and of the profession of solemn vows. Thereafter the prescribed enclosure extended to *beatas*.

24. Rita Ferraris (1983, 73–83) emphasizes this idea. She likewise cites indigenous *beatas* who lived in their own homes, prior to the founding of communities of tertiary orders.

25. See Santiago (1992) where he explains that the *beaterio* was originally named after the town's patroness, the Immaculate Conception, but the name was changed to Santa Rita after the death of the main benefactor, María Rita Gonzalez del Rivero y Quijano.

26. In his own report, the governor-general, the Marquis of Ovando cites similar conditions of the *recogidas*: Indias with lax morals, orphans, girls who escaped from their parents because these forced them to marry; also others who voluntarily learned to live a "civilized life" and Christian doctrine in Pasig and other towns (AGI 1754).

27. This glimpse of local matrimonial issues opens up to a larger but little explored area: in the colonial context, the interface as well as conflict between the Christian ideal and practice of marriage and local matrimonial customs that may be traced to precolonial society. For instance, the exercise of parental authority in the choice of spouse was common to both traditions.

28. For this section the rules of *hermana* Paula's house and the pertinent articles of the constitutions of the Beaterio de Compañía and the rules of Santa Catalina were used to represent the eighteenth century (AUST 1788; AGI 1758; APSR 1696).

For the nineteenth century, the rules of Santa Catalina (Anon. 1866), Santa Rosa (Gainza 1856, fols. 2–18), Santa Isabel (Anon. 1858, 819–21), and the Normal School of Santa Isabel in Camarines (Gainza 1877, 106–9) served as bases.

29. This is based on the *reglamentos* of Santa Catalina of 1866, of Santa Isabel of 1858, and of government schools for girls as legislated in 1863.

30. The 1880 *reglamento* of Santa Isabel (ch. 6, art. 25–27) reflected this change as well, because they prepared students to take the qualifying examination for primary school teachers: it stipulated a broader curriculum for the up-

per level, which included world, Spanish, and Philippine history, geography, natural history, geometric drawing, hygiene, and domestic economy. Nonetheless, the academic subjects covered only basic notions.

31. In the *Proyecto general de instrucción pública* of 1870, which was meant to implement the educational reform decree of 1863 in the Philippines, the Comisión de Reformas Administrativas (1870, 3–4) that had prepared it reiterated the emphasis on religious education, together with moral regeneration and material progress as the goals of reform.

32. Regarding Spanish educational thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century, see Ruiz (1970, 30–40). He likewise discusses Spanish educational policy, which served as a point of reference for Philippine educational policy in the second half of the nineteenth century.

33. The popular rulebook *Urbana at Feliza* contains a detailed description of the daily round of activities in a mid-nineteenth-century boarding school where Urbana stayed as an *interna* (de Castro 1996, 15–23).

## Abbreviations

AGI	Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain
AHN	Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, Spain
APSR	Archivo de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario, Manila, Philippines
ARVM	Archive of the Religious of the Virgin Mary, Quezon City, Philippines
AUST	Archives of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines
exp.	expediente
leg.	legajo

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