



THE KAHIMONAN RITUAL OF THE MAMANWA: EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE AND SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COSMOS, PEOPLE, AND NATURE

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ABSTRACT – This study examined the *Kahimonan* ritual of the *Mamanwa* as an embodied expression of cultural knowledge that affirms the community’s interconnected relationship with people, nature, and the cosmos. Using a phenomenological approach complemented by semiotic analysis, the research explored how ritual movements, offerings, prohibitions, and sacred speech revealed a worldview grounded in reciprocity, purity, and ecological-spiritual balance. Data were gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviews with elders, *baylan*, and culture bearers, and audio-visual documentation of two ritual events conducted in 2023 and 2024. Ritual narratives in *Minamanwa* and *Waray* were translated into English and validated by community members. Findings showed that the *Kahimonan* functioned as a lived pedagogy and a dynamic sign system through which dance, prayer, fasting, and offering mediated relationships among humans, *Magbabaja*, and the natural world. Ritual elements like the *haklad* and *ma-ma* offerings, animal sacrifice, and the sequencing of performance embodied divine reciprocity. Taboos on food, scent, dress, and movement cultivated bodily discipline, reverence, and resilience essential to ritual efficacy. Gendered roles in cooking, chanting, dancing, and officiating were found to be complementary yet flexible, indicating continuity alongside adaptive social organization. Sacred spaces such as the *bagobayan* (altar) and restricted practices such as the *tud-om* demonstrated boundaries between the sacred and the profane, reinforcing communal identity and spiritual privacy. Overall, integrating emic interpretations with etic analysis, revealed the *Kahimonan* is integrative cosmological practice that sustains cultural memory, social cohesion, while embodying an ethics of dwelling that links human action with the land, the spirit world, and *Magbabaja* (deity). Through this embodied ritual life, healing, protection, and cultural continuity were enacted.

Keywords: embodied knowledge, Indigenous Knowledge, phenomenology, ritual, semiotic signification



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