

Towards a Theory of Women in the Agamaniyog Folktales

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop a substantive theory on the women characters in the Agamaniyog Folktales through the use of the Grounded Theory method.

The analysis of the women characters entailed constant comparison, labeling and categorizing. The analysis revealed three related concepts.

First, women characters are of two main types: the good women and the bad women. And they are of three subtypes: the princesses, *ba'is* and non-royal women. Each subtype has categories. The princesses are of two kinds: well-intentioned princesses and envious princesses. The *ba'is* are of two kinds: strong-minded *ba'is* and wicked *ba'i*. The non-royal women are of six kinds: kind non-royal women, wise non-royal women, easily-led non-royal women, lazy non-royal women, wicked non-royal women and envious non-royal women.

Second, all good women characters found themselves in favorable circumstances at the end of the stories. And most of the bad women characters found themselves in unfavorable circumstances at the end of the stories.

Third, women characters showed that they may value all or any of these: goodness, wealth, marriage and revenge. These values are influenced by the valuing of *maratabat* of the Maranaos.

It is recommended that a study be made that would lead to a formal theory on women characters in folktales. A comparative study on women characters in Agamaniyog folktales and other Asian folktales is also suggested.

Keywords: Agamaniyog Folktales, Comparative Analysis, Grounded Theory, Maranao Women, Maratabat, Orality, Substantive Theory

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Introduction

Literature springs from man's need to express himself. And since he lives in a certain milieu then his expression is affected by the values and the events in his society. Literature becomes a mirror of his world. Thus, it is a good avenue for understanding people through its characters.

Agamaniyog folktales were used here in the studying of the women characters because these are the folktales which come from a culture that values women. Coronel (1979) wrote that "the woman in Maranao society is an important person. Whereas her contemporary is given equal rights and treated vilely in the name of Women's Lib, she is ever the queen and always treated as such." Moreover, these folktales were chosen not only to bare its beauty to the readers but also to generate awareness on the richness of Philippine folk literature.

This study was premised on the supposition that a substantive theory can be developed through the study of women characters. And more importantly, this study will hopefully pave the way for Maranaos to develop a deep appreciation of their culture and for the non-Maranaos to gain an understanding of Maranao culture and society.

Agamaniyog Folktales

According to Saber (1979) in the introduction of the *Mindanao Art and Culture, The Agamaniyog Tales*, Maranao folktales existing in oral tradition have various settings which are real as well as imaginary. Few of the examples of the real settings are Egypt, Medina, Baghdad, Johore, Sumatra and Bandiarmasin. These settings could be taken as evidence that voyaging ancestors have heard or have visited these places. The imaginary settings on the other hand, do not correspond to real places today or in the past, these are "characteristics of poetic fancies of a people who live in a time similar to the Homeric Age of oral stories..." The examples of these are Mantapoli, Balantankairan, Sky Region (Antar a Langit), Land of Gold (Inged a Bolawan), Land of Silver (Inged a Pirak), Land of Gems (Inged a Montiya) and Agamaniyog (Land of Coconuts).

Agamaniyog is the frequent setting of the Maranao folktales and fables. "Agama" is a Sanskrit word for "religion." For the Maranaos this

means "town or village community, which had land, people, a mosque, wealth, and power distinct from those of their neighbors." "*Niyog*" is a Filipino term for "coconuts." Agamaniyog then means, "land of coconuts." In many versions of the folklore "Agamaniyog is a land of splendor and glory, not as simple as any real *agama* on the Lake Lanao shores...The fabled Sultanate of Agamaniyog is often described as possessing vast land, sea, lake, river, and forest territories, a multitude of people, houses, boats, arms, sailors, warriors, animals, and fruit gardens—hence, a fairyland" (Saber, 1979).

It is important to note that Agamaniyog is an imaginary setting of the folktales and this does not refer to Marawi, Lanao or any place in Mindanao. However, because the local coloring of the tales strongly suggests Maranao culture, then it could be inferred that Agamaniyog folktales are stories which are handed down from generation to generation by the Maranao folk. In fact, the folktales may mention objects and beliefs present in Maranao society, such as: *orobarang* (servants); *tonongs* (water spirits); *torogan* (royal house); *lamin* (tower of the princess); *kalilang* (merry making); *khutba* (wedding sermon); *lawiyan* (customary visit of a new bride in her husband's community); *naga* (dragon); *montia* (precious stones); *mosala* (kerchiefs) and many others. In addition, this also relates to a function of folklore by Bascom (1965) cited in Francisco (1994), that "folklore may mirror the familiar details of culture, and incorporate common situations from everyday life..."

Saber (1979) also wrote that Agamaniyog stories have a variety of plots to entertain or to teach lessons. The characters also vary. There are "those who are angelic" as well as those who are devilish. The angelic are the "wise and beautiful princes and princesses, sages, and religious characters." The devilish are "the thieves, tricksters, swindlers, deceivers, liars, gossipers, war-mongers, and others."

In addition, Agamaniyog tales, as part of the Maranao folklore, reflects the culture of the Maranaos. Tawano (2001) presented in her essay that social structure, kinship, marriage and respect can be seen in these folktales. Aside from this, the common motifs of the folktales were also identified. The motifs are punishment, love and reincarnation.

The Agamaniyog tales then are interesting stories of the Maranao folk.

Storytelling

Storytelling is very important for man. It is here where he conveys his ideas and experiences. Jenkins (*n.d.*) wrote that "All cultures tell stories. Oral forms are found in all cultures, though specific formats vary. Even literate people enjoy oral stories." And this is echoed in Wikipedia (2008) which states that "Every culture has its stories, legends, and every culture has its storytellers, often revered figures with the magic of the tale in their voices and minds...Traditionally, oral stories were passed from generation to generation, and survived solely by memory." Eric Miller (*n.d.*) wrote, "the face-to-face storyteller is not an island unto herself—she is a member of a community that has an ongoing tradition. In the course of performance, a face to face storyteller uses conventions that are known within that community."

Therefore, the present situation and culture of a society may be integrated to the stories of the past. The Agamaniyog folktales are stories which are told by the Maranao folk who are followers of Islam. Thus, in some of the Agamaniyog folktales, Islamic culture is incorporated even though these stories originated in pre-Islamic times. And since the stories have now been written down then the Islamic expressions have become permanent.

Storytelling is related to the concept of orality. "Orality can be defined as thought and its verbal expression in societies where the technologies of literacy (especially writing and print) are unfamiliar to most of the population. The study of orality is closely allied to the study of oral tradition (Wikipedia, 2008)." And since folktales are part of the oral tradition then the concept of orality can be used in this study.

Ong (1989) wrote "Today primary oral culture in the strict sense hardly exists, since every culture knows of writing and has some experience of its effects. Still to varying degrees many cultures and subcultures, even those with a high-technology ambiance, preserve much of the mind-set of primary orality." The Agamaniyog folktales, for instance, are stories which were originally in the oral form. These were then retold by imaginative narrators (Saber, 1989). And they are written down not only for preservation but also for reaching others who cannot come in contact with the narrators of the stories. Ong (1989) also wrote "...Oral cultures indeed produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth, which are no longer even

possible once writing has taken possession of the psyche. Nevertheless, without writing, human consciousness cannot achieve its fuller potentials, cannot produce other beautiful powerful creations. In this sense, orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing." And so the Agamaniyog folktales have come a long way. These have been retold, translated, written, published and studied.

According to Ong (1989), one characteristic of an orally based thought and expression is that it is "close to the human lifeworld." Ong (1989) wrote "...oral cultures must conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge with more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings." In other words, when someone would tell a story, he would relate the story to his own familiar world or the familiar world of the listener. Thus, a society's present culture may be integrated in the story. This characteristic of orality can be seen in the integration of Islam and of Maranao culture in the Agamaniyog Folktales. Another characteristic of orally based thought according to Ong (1989) is that it is homeostatic. Ong (1989) wrote "...oral societies live very much in a present which keeps itself in equilibrium or homeostasis by sloughing off memories which no longer have present relevance." He continued "...Words acquire their meanings only from their always insistent actual habitat, which is not, as in a dictionary, simply other words, but includes also gestures, vocal inflections, facial expression, and the entire human, existential setting in which the real, spoken word always occurs. Word meanings come continuously out of the present, though past meanings of course have shaped the present meaning in many and varied ways, no longer recognized." In other words, when a story has been transferred from one generation to the next, words or even the meaning of the words in the story may vanish because the word or the meaning of the word does not exist in the present society. Thus, it could be said that the Agamaniyog folktales in its oral form years ago is different from its written form today because some words which were used years ago may not be understood today. Hence, the folktales have changed.

Maranao Women

Literally, *Maranao* means people of the lake. Their homeland is called Lanao which means lake. Their oldest settlement started around here, and up to this day, highly populated communities still dot the lake (Bara, *n.d.*).

Coronel (1979) wrote that :

Gentle and charming as a young girl, obedient to her elders, deferring to the choice of her parents as to who would be her husband, marriage ushers in another woman: the wife and mother who has power in her hands, for now, she, in turn, can ask others to do what she desires. Indeed the Maranao world is largely matriarchal.

The Maranao woman shows her ingenuity in the way she cares for her baby, her ways of cooking the many dishes that make up the Maranao cuisine, and the elegant ways of serving these dishes, not to forget the hand-embroidered and hand-made decorations that hang on the walls and windows of her house...

Maranao women have played important roles in their home. One of these roles is of being a mother. According to Sumagayan (1982), "it is the duty of the parents, especially the mothers, to teach their daughters the value of good manners, refinement and chastity, because a smear on her character would injure the reputation of her parents and lower the prestige of her family."

This idea is also essayed by Saber (1979), when he wrote that "the lovely, lively and respectable place of woman in Maranao society is the home where she plays the ethical role of a daughter, a mother, an aunt, or a kindly grandmother." As an adult, "the menfolk consult her on important matters of the family and community affairs, more so if she holds a female title (*grar*) and is known for her wisdom."

Moreover, in their community, women can voice out their ideas. The *ba'i* for instance can express her ideas. According to Mangadang (1957) as cited in Sumagayan (1982):

The Maranao women occupy a very distinct position in Maranao society and they can wield a tremendous influence. As a matter of fact, there are those who can afford to disagree with an influential sultan's decision, but very few can have the courage to

go against the decision made by the respectable woman. Disputing parties may not hold the decision made by the powerful sultans, but these parties will have to listen to and honor the opinions suggested by the sultan's wife which is designed to end the quarrel.

In the same line of thought, Tamang (2004) wrote:

Maranao women from the Bangsamoro peoples in the Philippines view themselves as "*tiglimpyo sa mga hugaw sa katilingban*" (cleaners of the dirt of the community). They usually play the role of the mediators in conflict situations. Whenever there is family conflict, the woman addresses critical issues and brings the parties to settlement. Within Maranao culture, women do not consider themselves oppressed or exploited because they know their specific roles and place within the community and are well respected and influential.

Brecht (2005) wrote that "a woman in Maranao Society has more liberties and more support, if she fulfills the expectations of the society, which ideally would be to marry according to her position, to have children and to follow Islam. Nevertheless, there seems to be a change in this traditional picture of a woman, going from one extreme to the other, from a woman staying consciously at home to care for her children and wearing the hijab to a woman who is independent from her family." The Maranao women today are no longer solely the "home-oriented" women, but are becoming involved in outside activities which keep them abreast of the social trends of the time (Sumagayan, 1982).

Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss initially presented Grounded Theory in 1967 in their study "*The Discovery of Grounded Theory*". They wrote that it is a "discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research." In other words, the theory is developed from the data, rather than the other way around. It moves from the specific to the more general

(Davidson 2002). As the researcher does not begin a research with a preconceived theory in mind, but begins in an area of study allowing theory to emerge through research data, the method, the collection of data, the analysis and the eventual theory, should be in close relation to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This is then echoed by Charmaz (2006) who wrote that grounded theory is a method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on creating conceptual framework or theories through building inductive analysis from the data. Hence, the analytic categories are directly 'grounded' in the data. The primary objective of grounded theory then is to expand upon an explanation of a phenomenon by identifying the key elements of that phenomenon, and then categorizing the relationships of those elements to the context and process of the experiment (Davidson, 2002).

Constant comparison is the heart of the process. Data is compared to other data. When a theory has begun to emerge the data is then compared to theory (Dick, *n.d.*). Hence, the basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read (and re-read) a textual database (such as a corpus of field notes) and "discover" or label variables (called categories, concepts and properties) and their interrelationships (Borgatti, *n.d.*).

Comparative analysis can generate two basic kinds of theory: substantive and formal (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Substantive theory is a theoretical interpretation or explanation of a delimited problem in a particular area. Formal theory on the other hand is a theoretical rendering of a generic issue or process that cuts across several substantive areas of study. The concepts in a formal theory are abstract and general and the theory specifies the links between these concepts (Charmaz, 2006). In other words, the generation of a substantive theory can be achieved by a comparative analysis between or among groups within the same substantive area. However, the generation of a formal theory is through a comparative analysis among different kinds of substantive area (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Methodology

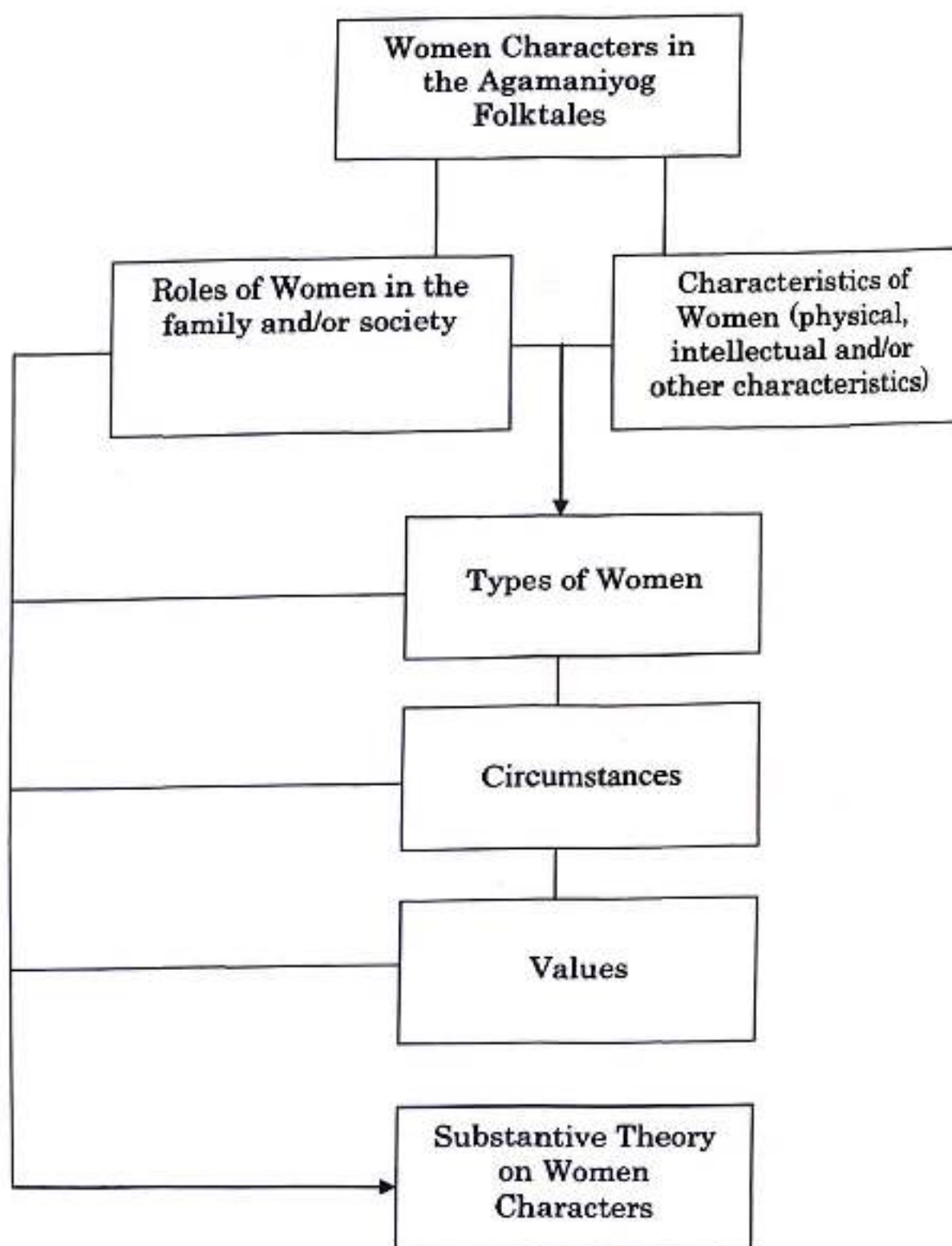
Research Design

The researcher used the descriptive literary analysis using the qualitative method. The grounded theory method was also used in presenting, analyzing, interpreting and comparing the women characters in the Agamaniyog Folktales. The sixteen selected Agamaniyog folktales are: *Curse on Linggayadan Mindayo*, *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts*, *Bago a Raga*, *Fat Thin Deer*, *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal*, *Marata a Balowa's Good Neighbor*, *Tiny Bird*, *A Healthy Exchange*, *Empty Bags*, *Bitter Rice*, *Stones*, *A Lesson for the Sultan*, *Potri' Maalika*, *Anak and the Crow*, *Potri Intantiyaya*, *The Story of Solampid* and *Daliday a Binembar*

Data Gathering Procedures

The women characters and their roles were identified. Their characteristics were then analyzed by looking at how they were treated by the other characters in the story and how they responded to the treatment. Women characters were then categorized using coding procedures. The categories that developed led to the identification of the types of women. The circumstances of the different types of women were then examined by looking at what happened to them at the end of the stories. Next, the values of the women characters were then analyzed and then associated to their circumstances. Lastly, an integration of the analysis of the roles and characteristics of the women characters, types of women, circumstances and values of the women characters was done to be made the basis for the laying out of a substantive theory on the women in the Agamaniyog Folktales.

Schematic Diagram



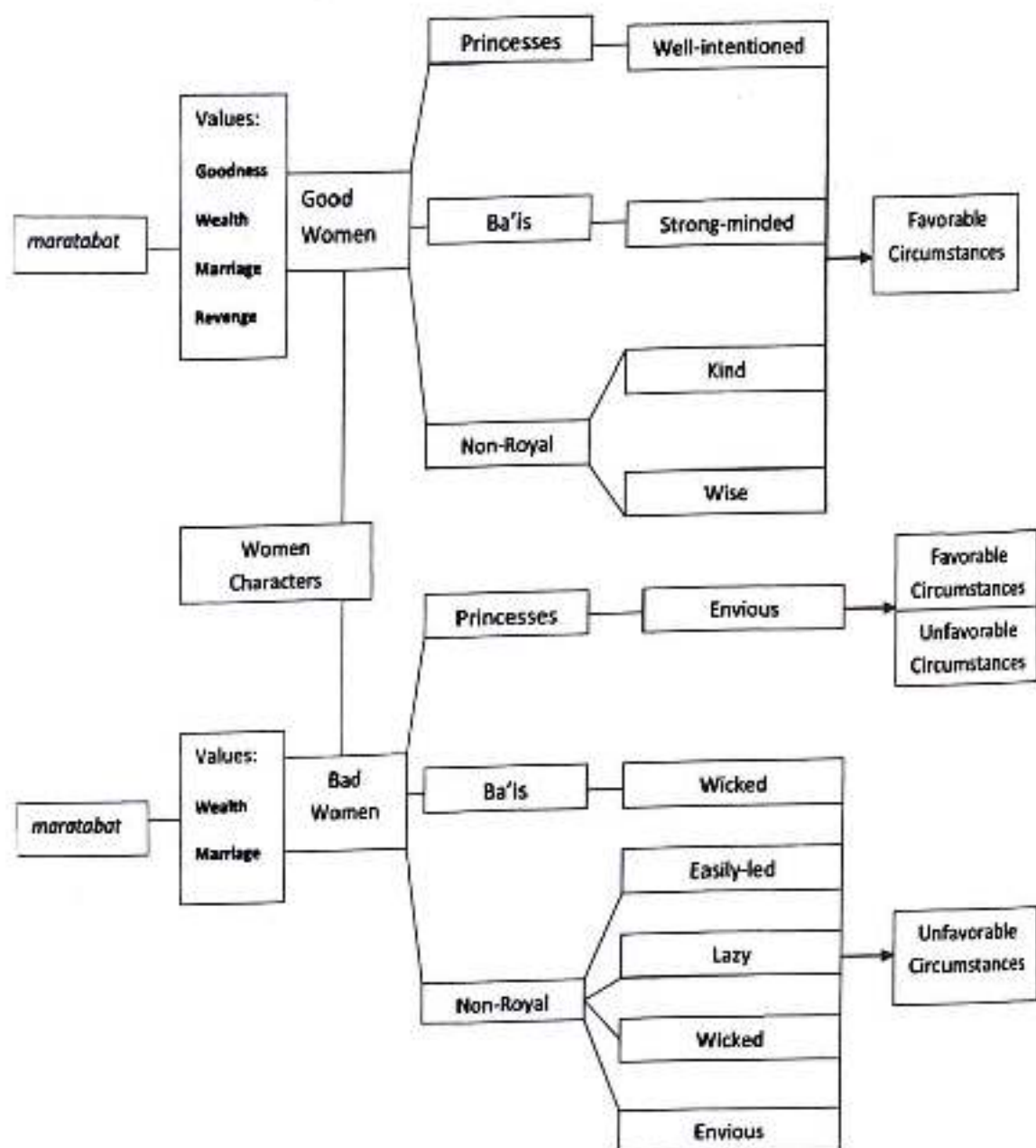
There were two publications used in the gathering of the Agamaniyog folktales. The following are: Mindanao Art and Culture No.1 (The Agamaniyog Folktales), published in 1979 and Mindanao Art and Culture No.7 (The Agamaniyog Folktales, Book II) published in 1986 by the University Research Center of Mindanao State University, Marawi City.

The Mindanao Art and Culture No. 1 has 24 Agamaniyog folktales. Mindanao Art and Culture No. 7 has 10 Agamaniyog Folktales. However only 16 folktales were chosen from the two books because these are the only folktales which met the criteria. The folktales were chosen according to the following criteria : (1) The folktales should come from Mindanao Art and Culture No. 1 (The Agamaniyog Folktales, published in 1979), and Mindanao Art and Culture No. 7 (Agamaniyog Folktales, Book II, published in 1986) a non-periodical series publication of Mindanao State University (2) Stories should have main women characters (3) and women characters should not be embodied as animals.

Eleven stories were taken from the Mindanao Art and Culture No. 1. These stories are: *Curse on Linggayadan Mindayo*, *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts*, *Bago a Raga*, *Fat Thin Deer*, *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal*, *Marata a Balowa's Good Neighbor*, *Tiny Bird*, *A Healthy Exchange*, *Empty Bags*, *Bitter Rice*, *Stones* and *A Lesson for Sultan*. Five stories were from the Mindanao Art and Culture No. 7. The stories are *Potri' Maalika*, *Anak and the Crow*, *Potri Intantiyaya*, *Daliday a Binembar* and *The Story of Solampid*.

Forty-four women characters are found in the selected folktales. However, only thirty-eight women characters were used in the final analysis since only forty-one women characters have significant roles in the stories. From the forty-one, two women characters' circumstances were not mentioned (that of Ina a Kabayan and Kinembangan) and another woman character cannot be classified as either good or bad (the Ba'i in *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts*).

A Schematic Diagram of the Substantive Theory of Women in the Agamaniyog Folktales



A Substantive Theory on Women in the Selected Agamanyog Folktales

In the process of analysis, women characters were constantly compared, labeled and categorized. The analysis revealed three related concepts.

The first concept revealed is that women characters are of two main types (the good women and the bad women). Three subtypes (the princesses, the ba'is and the non-royal women) were also found and each of the subtypes have different categories. The princesses were categorized into two: the well-intentioned princesses and the envious princesses. The ba'is were also categorized into two: the strong-minded ba'is and the wicked ba'i. The non-royal women were categorized into five: the wise non-royal women, the easily-led non-royal women, the lazy non-royal women, the wicked non-royal women and the envious non-royal women.

The two main types of women are the good women and the bad women.

The good women are those women who do good for their family, for their relatives and for the people they love. These are also the women who took revenge, and held justice in their hands when they or their family are insulted or mistreated.

The bad women are those women who do bad deeds to their family, relatives or other people. These are the women who think only of themselves when they do such deeds. These are also the women who envy other people.

It is important to note that in Maranao society, according to Saber, Tamano and Warriner (*n.d.*) in Saber and Tamano (1985-86) "a man is judged to be **good** or **bad** not so much in terms of the consequences of his acts, but rather in terms of the extent to which he has *maratabat*." This is reiterated by Casal (2007) who wrote "Maranaos equate tradition with conscience. One's acts are justified, not by their consequences, but by how zealously they conform to *maratabat*, the inherited body of Maranao custom and usage." Casal (2007) also wrote that "Much of the custom-law concerns the rights, privileges and prerogatives of each class level of society. These rights are *maratabat*, and so are the procedures for protecting them and punishing a violation of them. Insults that bring on shame and loss of face are defined as a violation of those rights; and it is *maratabat* to do the duty to avenge a loss which involves not only the

person insulted but all the members of his family and kin." Thus the valuing of *maratabat* is included in the definition of goodness in this study. And so, good women in this study therefore, may take revenge because they are simply upholding their *maratabat*.

There are also subtypes of women. These are considered as subtypes because these are under the umbrella of the main types of women. The following are the subtypes of women: princesses, *ba'is* and non royal women.

The princesses are the daughters of sultans and *ba'is*. In the folktales, the princesses are all described as beautiful.

The *ba'i* is the wife of the sultan. According to Sumagayan (1982), the *ba'i a labi* is the highest rank for women, as "sultan" is for men. In a traditional political system this is actually a hereditary title or position intended only for women of high status. During important gatherings or when certain decisions are to be made in the community, the *ba'is* are consulted. In addition, Sinfuego (1982, cited by Sumagayan) said that a *ba'i a labi* "exercises the same authority, power, rights and privileges enjoyed by the sultan." Moreover, Madale (cited by Sumagayan, 1982) points out that "the queen acts as adviser of the sultan on both temporal and spiritual matters of the sultanate..."

The non-royal women are those women who are not of royalty or who are not of high status.

Furthermore, the subtypes of women have different categories.

The princesses, are subdivided into two, the well-intentioned princesses and the envious princesses. The well-intentioned princesses are those who do good deeds not only for the good of themselves but also for other people. These are also the princesses who are brave enough to revenge those who have insulted them or mistreated their family. On the other hand, the envious princesses are those who are jealous and who resent the good fortune of others.

The *ba'is* are of two kinds, the strong-minded *ba'is* and the wicked *ba'i*. The strong-minded *ba'is* are those who are determined to reach their goals and to prove that their ideas are correct. Most of these *ba'is* are brave enough to revenge on persons who have hurt or insulted them and their families. The wicked *ba'i* is the *ba'i* who deceives and who does evil deeds to her family or to other people.

The non-royal women are of six kinds. The following are the kind non-royal women, wise non-royal women, easily-led non-royal women,

lazy non-royal women, wicked non royal women and the envious non-royal women. The kind non-royal women are those women who are generous, softhearted and helpful women. The wise non-royal women are those women who use their wisdom and knowledge to teach others a lesson. The easily-led non-royal women are those women who are naïve, weak-willed and who does what other people would ask them to do. The lazy non-royal women are those women who does not contribute anything to the community. These are the women who just sit around and who do not help their husbands. The wicked non-royal women are those women who do evil deeds to others. These are the women who cheat, who lie and who deceive other people. The envious non-royal women are those women who are jealous and who resent the good fortune of others.

The second concept revealed is that all good women characters found themselves in favorable circumstances at the end of the stories. These women are the well-intentioned princesses, the strong minded ba'is, the submissive ba'i, the kind non-royal women and the wise non-royal women. Most of the bad women characters on the other hand, have found themselves in unfavorable circumstances at the end of the stories. These women are the wicked ba'i, the easily-led non-royal women, the lazy non-royal women, the wicked non-royal women and the envious non-royal women. (But not all the envious princesses found themselves in unfavorable circumstances. The probable reason for this is that since the envious princesses did not harm anybody in the story, they were given some consideration.) This concept also reveals that in general, the folktale's message is that "good begets good." If the characters would do good, then they would also experience favorable (or good) circumstances at the end of the stories. If the characters would do bad, then they would experience unfavorable (bad) circumstances) at the end of the stories.

There are two kinds of circumstances wherein the women find themselves in at the end of the stories. These are the favorable circumstances and the unfavorable circumstances. Favorable circumstances refer to pleasing or happy conditions or situations. Unfavorable circumstances on the other hand, refer to depressing, miserable or tragic conditions or situations.

All good women—the well-intentioned princesses, strong-minded *ba'is*, kind non-royal women and wise non-royal women—find themselves in favorable circumstances at the end of the stories.

Meanwhile, most of the bad women find themselves in unfavorable circumstances at the end of the stories. The following who found themselves in unfavorable circumstances are: the envious princesses, wicked *ba'i*, lazy non-royal women, wicked non-royal women and jealous non-royal women. There are however, some envious princesses who find themselves in favorable circumstances at the end of the stories.

The third concept revealed is that women characters may value all or any of these: goodness, wealth, marriage and revenge. And these values are influenced by maratabat.

According to Saber, Tamano and Warriner (n.d.) in Saber and Tamano (1985-86) *maratabat* is defined as "face" or "amour proper" of the Maranao. They also wrote that "an understanding of *maratabat* will explain and account for a great deal of Maranao behavior, but most particularly those portions of behavior which seem less explicable by common-sense assumption and understandings." In addition, Svenja Smelcher (2007) cited Fishceder (2006) in an essay "Rido and Its Influence on the academe, NGOs and the Military" that "*maratabat* is a guiding principle for every Maranao regardless of sex, status or age."

Maratabat according to Saber, Tawano and Warriner (n.d.) in Saber and Tamano (1985-86), "is legal in terms of traditional and customary law...Most insults, shame and loss of face are defined by violation of these rights and privileges. Much customary law implies the existence of *maratabat* and the necessity for its maintenance on the part of the family." Brecht (2005) wrote that "In some cases the revenge to the violation of *maratabat* results in *rido*, the blood feud." Disomangcop (2007) wrote that "the practice of *maratabat* does not bar a person with high educational attainment from killing another person once his *maratabat* has been transgressed. There was one law practitioner who was compelled to kill the brother of his brother's killer because of this." He also wrote that "because of the desire to uphold their *maratabat*, a killing could cause a vicious cycle for vendetta and counter vendetta, one family avenging the death of a relative until a solution is arrived at."

The values therefore of the women characters in Agamaniyog folktales may differ with the values of the characters in other folktales from another society or culture. Like for instance the concept of revenge may not be shown in other folktales (or fairytales) but in Agamaniyog folktales it is repeatedly shown. If one would look at the common fairytale characters like Cinderella, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty of other

societies (Germany for example), one could not see them taking revenge even if they were treated harshly by other characters in the stories. But in the Agamanyog folktales, most if the ba'is and the princesses take revenge on those who have hurt them.

Since the stories did not show the traditional roles of women in *maratabat*, then it can be assumed that these stories reveal women's desire to take revenge on their own if they or their family are insulted or mistreated. Although, only three stories show that women are the ones who deliberately caused death to other characters (*Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts, Stones and Daliday a Binembar*), these still led to surmise that even though they (the women) are regarded as precious and fragile, they still want to be seen as independent and strong women.

The women who caused death to other women in the stories, like *Tingting a Bolawan*, *Daliday a Binembar* and the *Ba'i* in *Stones* reflects what Disomangcop (2007) has written, "a Maranao does not just kill a person without a reasonable cause. Insult or defamation could goad a person into killing another. Once this is inflicted on him, he is ready to face his enemy just to uphold his "dirtyed *maratabat*."

It is important to note that the bad women did not value revenge. The possible reason could be that most of these women are non-royal women. And according to Casal (2007) "the degree of *maratabat* expected of a person depends on his social status. A subservient may not conform to it, while a datu must be totally attuned to the minutest details of its observance..." Another reason could be that since some of these bad women (like Potri Bonso and Maragaraga in *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts* and Maragaraga and Masangasanga in *Daliday a Binembar*) are the women who violated the *maratabat* of other characters in the stories then they are the ones who are subjected to revenge.

The valuing of goodness, wealth, marriage and revenge of the women characters are interconnected through the *maratabat* of the Maranaos.

Goodness includes the value of *maratabat*. Thus, the value of revenge is also contained in the value of goodness. A woman in the folktales may be considered good if she values *maratabat*. If she is insulted or shamed then she has to take revenge on the person or persons who have transgressed her *maratabat*. Goodness can also be related to wealth and marriage. Women may gain wealth and or marriage through their goodness. Good women like the ba'is have shown that through hard

work and determination, they were able to gain wealth. For the princesses and non-royal women, their being kind and generous led them to wealthy princess who married them. Wealth and marriage (to rich men) recur in the stories. Therefore, these are important in Maranao society. These two maintain or raises one's status in a community. And status is very important since one's *maratabat* is also dependent on one's status. According to Saber, Tawano and Warriner (*n.d.*) in Saber and Tamano (1985-86), "*Maratabat is an expression of one's social position.*" They also wrote that "The degree of *maratabat* expected of a person is directly proportional to social rank. A person of slave status is not expected to have and would be punished for exhibiting *maratabat*. On the other hand, persons of highest status are expected to possess and to exhibit a jealous protection of the *maratabat*."

Maratabat then connects goodness, wealth, marriage and revenge as values of the women in the folktales.

Recommendations

Based on the study the following recommendations are drawn:

1. A study that would lead to a formal theory on women characters is recommended.
2. A study that would compare and contrast the women in the Agamaniyog folktales and other Asian folktales is also recommended.
3. A study on women characters in literature that would use a computer program to identify the types of women and their circumstances which would then lead to a theory is also recommended.
4. A study of the folktales' male characters using the same approach is recommended to identify the images of male characters in the folktales.
5. It is also recommended that The Agamaniyog Folktales be included in Philippine Literature classes.

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