MARATABAT SOCIETY AND THE NON-MARANAO:

Some Theories in Ethnic Interaction

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Maratabat and the Scholars

In their famous article on the Maranao maratabat, Saber, Tamano and Warriner state: "Non-moro residents of Lanao as well as the Maranao themselves often refer to *maratabat* as the key to Maranao 'psychology.' We assume that this judgment contains some truth. Specifically, we propose that an understanding of *maratabat* will explain and account for a great deal of Maranao behavior, but most particularly those portions of the behavior which seem least explicable by common-sense assumptions and understandings."[1]

There are reasons to believe that by singling out maratabat the authors may have indicated the heart of otherwise "inscrutable" peculiarities in Maranao behavior. Yet in spite of their explanation, it appears that they have not satisfied the lay non-Maranao who has to live – or even die – among Maranaos, and who certainly would want a description of the phenomenon, *especially as it affects him*. From his point of view, in other words, the approach of the authors has been somewhat academic. The main bulk of their article presents largely a case in which a killing made in 1898 in the name of maratabat was avenged, also in the name of maratabat, two generations later, in 1945, with a family massacre. This illustration probably explains well how maratabat can motivate and direct unhappy consequences between Maranaos. But for the non-Maranao who brushes shoulders with them every day and whose needs for enlightenment are immediate, the article fails to show how Maranao maratabat could be or may have been directed upon him. Subsequently, he is still at a loss for explanations why Maranaos do what they do to him and at him, or how their deeds that one way or another affect him are results of or, from the Maranao moral standpoint at least, are justified by maratabat.[2]

In fact the want for such explanations may be striking when one considers that "scholarship on the Maranao has been fairly abundant" (so observed one scholar before 1974)[3] and is obviously far from diminishing in productivity. The discrepancy probably can be accounted for by noting that, among these writings, there is an apparent imbalance of emphasis in the treatment of the subject – at least from

the standpoint of the non-Maranao in maratabat society. While they have unquestionably made large contributions in clearing away much of the misconceptions and prejudices about the Maranao, the scholars also have treated the subject only as an independent object of academic exercise — much like a biologist would approach a particular avian species in its natural habitat — and not as human beings intereacting with other ethnic groups. The fact is that Maranaos are not bird subjects but social human beings. Moreover, they are no longer quite as isolated as they are believed to be before the turn of the country[4] and a very immediate and real phenomenon that cannot be ignored is that they do interact intensively with non-Maranao neighbors every day with varied and sometimes surprising consequences.

Why is this interaction omitted by the scholars? Is the omission incidental to the limitations of their interests that is, therefore unintentional? Possibly it is so. Still, intriguingly, it seems that the high impartiality of pure scholarship on Maranao behavior has been conducted so rigorously as to also preclude the possibility of unflattering criticism. Whether so intended or not, the modes of study seem to have been carried out with the reluctance to handle moral questions (let alone possible answers) involving Maranao behavior, especially in contrast with that of the non-Maranao — as though such questions cannot be raised with any valid objectivity. Among those writings about Maranao behavior the most daring so far has been that of Saber, Tamano and Warriner. A typical of writings on the Maranao, they have picked out one of the less cheerful aspects of Maranao society for examination, pried, as it were, into some folds and flaps of its texture, and have gone on the verge of raising a moral question over maratabat. Typically, however, they did not pursue the question — which was beyond the scope of their scholarly inquiry. Moreover, the authors, individually or as a group, have not brought it up again substantially in any subsequent work, much less talked about Maranao interaction with non-Maranaos.[5]

In this connection, it is also observable that among those writings that have serious historical, anthropological or sociological substance but are presented more or less for the lay reader (a number of separate short works, for example, by Mamitua Saber and others by Abdullah T. Madale), the trend also is to write descriptively only of the colorful and interesting folkways and history of the Maranao and not critically of the gloomy sides of their social behavior. All of those writings and the other works as well, credible and important as they may be, give the general impression that no such somber cultural aspects exist and that all things are bright and beautiful, great and small, among the People of the Lake. Yet every person dedicated to remaining an adult probably realizes that no human society on earth is entirely bright and beautiful in its ways. And no non-Maranao, who happens to find himself living among this people, will quite admit that everything is always love, understanding, justice and good cheer for him in Lanao.[6]

Possibly, the general tendency to say nothing unflattering of the Maranao is still an inertia (or hangover?) of recent general scholarly fervor (possibly initiated

by Najeeb Saleeby[7]) to dispel erroneous and prejudicial notions bred and popularized through centuries of hostility, distrust and gross ignorance about the "Moros." The general effort is to bring out the "good truths" in order to dissipate the popular bad falsehoods about the group in question. However, as the popular bad falsehoods have proven to be far too negative and unrealistic about Moros, it is not impossible that the weapon to destroy it may have tended to swing to the opposite extreme and to generalize about Moro "goodness." The general attitude appears to be to show that Moros are good fellows after all, speak nothing ill of them, and castigate, for the sake of balance, the non-Moros for prejudice and overall wickedness. Naturally, either viewpoint cannot be quite truthful. As every schoolboy probably knows, no people on earth are either entirely "black devil incarnates" (the term is from Saleeby) or entirely angels beatifically wreathed in halos. Still, the rhetoric advocating general Moro goodness may have reached such a volume that has impressed "prejudiced" non-Moros with the notion that all their negative conceptions about Moros are unilaterally false, as though now it is not possible for a Moro, or for some Moros, or for a good number of Moros to be bad and detestable characters, as many non-Moros happen to be. Now so overcome with the preponderance of expert opinion that give the impression of the opposite extreme, non-Moros who may suffer in one way or another from the ways of people identified as Moros may wonder if they should not console themselves only with the thought that their injuries are at least imagined falsehoods, so much "myth and fable,"[8] even if they died of it.

But also possibly, the general *delicadeza* among writers particularly on the Maranao not to deal critically with "sensitive" topics may be motivated by a considered reluctance to offend Maranao maratabat. This may be especially true among scholars who are themselves Maranaos, but perhaps is no less absent among scholars who cannot be mistaken for Maranaos. On this subject, the general attitude of the monastery of scholars, which either gains converts or degrades them with the stigma of sensationalistic "journalists" and non-scholars, appears to be to meditate daily on the conviction that these "sensitive" topics do not exist, except in the minds of "prejudiced" and ignorant Filipinos. And here we quickly come full circle, as it were, to our original item of discussion: maratabat appears to be also made to explain and account for *scholarly* "behavior which seems least explicable by common sense assumptions and understandings." That maratabat appears to be so sensitive as to affect even the scholars, who are otherwise noted for scientific objectivity, will be examined in succeeding paragraphs. For now it may suffice to comment that if it were so, one may ask if it were ultimately less offensive to the Maranao and his maratabat to be handled continually with flattery and kid gloves, even if he himself preferred such a treatment. In this case, one also may well wonder if the Maranaos, the non-Maranaos, scholarship itself, as well as peace, order, understanding and honesty all around would be well served in the long run by a scholarly evasion to treat the Maranaos as adults and to deal responsibly with "delicate" realities in-

volving them.

But so much for what scholars have not done and the speculations on why they have not done it. The main thing is that while they have not done as much as one would want them to (notably, not enough quantifying research work on the subject of Maranao interaction with other ethnic groups)[9], still, in related matters, they have done plenty. And from their productions, limited as these may be from one standpoint, as well as from some degree of independent observation made within a number of years among Maranaos, someone who is not exactly working hard at being scholarly may still reasonably work out answers to why Maranaos do what they do, not only to one another but especially to and at non-Maranaos, who may at first find their behavior somewhat "inscrutable" if not often also downright "distasteful."

Basic with the answers to that question is of course the matter of maratabat which Saber, Tamano and Warriner (1960) and Riemer (1976)[10] have described. It is a subject that this paper intends to re-examine. However, the main points of these two and the other sources, to which this study is obviously indebted, will not be simply repeated in the discussion. Rather, this paper intends to dwell on certain aspects of maratabat theory in a way that may be somewhat different from the themes of these authors but defines the subject as it relates to the non-Maranao.

It may serve the non-Maranao well if the basic connections of maratabat in the Maranao social fabric were first described. This approach may succeed in providing him with a theory on the sources and causes of the maratabat phenomenon that operates in Maranao society and apparently affects him as an adventitious "insider." It does not assume that maratabat is exclusive to the Maranaos, but proposes to pursue the particular maratabat that they exhibit.[12] It attempts no cross-ethnic comparisons because its aim is not to declare the phenomenon as unique to the people but to suggest a theory, especially for the non-Maranao, why it occurs and puts him in that quaint predicament where he finds himself.

Maratabat, the Family and Society

The theory involves a few propositions. The first is that maratabat may be basically a phenomenon arising from a particular quality of family relationships among the Maranaos. Maratabat even appears to be basically a family affair. This idea is not new , however, Although they have not belabored the point, Saber, Tamano and Warriner write of maratabat as a "family maratabat"[12] (mentioned twice). They state that "Insults, and the responsibility for rectifying those insults are shared throughout the family group – brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, grandsons and even more distant kin. Similarly, [any] prestige-giving event redounds not only to the perpetrator of these acts but also to his relative, his community, and his sultanate."[13] Moreover, the Sarosong-Batuampar case used for illustration, as well as the case of the maratabat participants in the land dispute (p. 93) well show vendet-

tas to be acted upon and because of family relationships. Mednick speaks of maratabat as a concern of the kin group[14] and Riemer, who mentions the "group's maratabat" or the family's relation to maratabat,[15] appears to assume it heavily in his work. More recently, a short article by Javier referred to "the family *maratabat*" or "the *maratabat* of the clan."[16]

It is probably essential, therefore, to examine the quality of Maranao family relationships in order to place maratabat in some perspective.

Although they do not always say so, writers on the Maranao generally impress upon in that Maranao society is essentially family-centere.[17] It may be no exaggeration to say that in this society, individuals and groups move for and because of the family — that is, the family basically animates and directs them to appropriate actions.[18] Still it must be emphasized that when one speaks of the Maranao family, he does not refer only to the immediate members who, for very Maranao reasons, are usually fairly numerous already, to begin with.[19] The Maranao family may be also conceived in terms of its being a fairly large and extended group that includes a crowd of cousins, uncles, aunts and other relatives of a variety of degrees of consanguinity, often even living under one roof. In short, the Maranao family cannot be conceived as independent of the clan.

Apparently founded on the members' common love, trust, loyalty and protection, the Maranao family is probably the most close-knit[20] large kindred group in the Philippine archipelago. Conceivably, it may be the well-preserved original of what the typical islanders' family had been, if not indeed the high development of the original. But what may be just as possible is that the large Maranao family (and the groups of families that make up Maranao society in general), as such, was probably evolved long ago, perhaps by environmental necessity and natural process, to become a kind of largescale human kota — a sort of independent, homely, moveable fortification— against unfriendly external forces.[21] In effect, it may have become a self-sustaining, self-contained, relatively in-breeding social organization, closed to and suspicious of outsiders,[22] creating its own rules of conduct, fostering its own loyalties and relying mainly on its own resources for survival—a nation and an island entire of itself, as it were.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, if one were to find that the Maranao tended to be ethnocentric (as an extension of family centrism) and, in a sense, introverted, perhaps even to the degree that an individual can be egocentric and introverted.[23] It is probable, under the circumstances, that when he looks outward, the Maranao sees the world as a family member—or more largely as a Maranao — would, and may show no ready inclination to view himself as a Maranao from the standpoint of the rest of the world. One might describe him as largely "provincial" for this reason.

But there may be one peculiarity about this provincialism: it appears to involve a deep-seated belief, hardly articulated in plain words but strongly felt, that *Maranao* (or more particularly the family) is the best in the world because in the perception of his homely heart, *Maranao* (or the family, the "we-group") is the center of the universe.[24] With this kind of loyalty and conviction, he is in his opinions and decisions strongly pro-family or pro-Maranao always; in his thinking and conduct, he carries an attitude that probably can be described as "family (or largely, Maranao) first."

Maranao Individual in Society

In view of this family and ethnic centrism, one may wonder how the individual perceives himself and acts in his society. Saber, Tamano and Warriner, among other scholars, have indicated that the individual moves for and because of the family and that, by the process of "social coercion," the family animates and directs him to appropriate actions. It may not be entirely careless to suggest the possibility that, *as long as he is among his people*, the Maranao "individual" does not exist apart from his family.[25] Western-oriented societies often regard the individual as a free and distinct entity from the family. It is perhaps possible to suggest that no such concept of freedom and distinction exists among the Maranaos in their homeland.

In "psychological substance"[26] the Maranao individual may be said to be so organically connected with his family that he cannot contradict its traditional inclinations and will without making that dreadful sound of family bones and flesh tearing. Not that he would want to contradict, in the first place. More likely, he would find no desire in him to do so. Basically, his relation with his family and society may be free from conflict and the wish to rebel. Largely, he may feel no sense of social constraint on his shoulders. Psychologically, he is most probably in concert with his society. In short, he acts inevitably in line with his kins' time-honored tradition.

Even if he were a distinguished scholar with a fairly high level of education obtained after many years in the West, the Maranao individual, *living and acting among his people*, may be unable to decide or act independently for and by himself. He may only appear to believe himself to be doing so. With all his experience and expertise in his profession, he may move decisively with relative independence, as long as his actions bring honor and inflict no injury on the family ties, tradition and honor. Once he perceives that his decisions and deeds may prove damaging to these ties, tradition and honor, even if his intended acts appear to him, as a scholar, to be morally just and proper — even imperative — from a non-Maranao standpoint, his reaction will probably be predictable, unhesitating and unilateral: the family interest must prevail. From the cradle he has been brought up in this family, which has pampered him and spoiled him, among whom he has experienced so much warmth and love that he could not possibly feel securely "at home" among any

other people anywhere else on earth.

Indeed the Maranao's affirmation of family ties, which may have been affirmed and reaffirmed by countless members of family lives before him, is probably some sort of trust that he has inherited and learned from the day he was born. Also very probably, it has been so long implanted and nourished in his subconscious, like a living part of himself, that in him it may be described as possibly bordering on the absolute and total. With this degree of commitment to his family and ethnicity, the Maranao would be a whole person, fully integrated in a personalized society.[27] He would know for a fact that who he is, what he is and what he does has the full endorsement of his kinsmen and friends. Positive in his self-esteem he would move in Maranao society with an almost naive aplomb that in some Maranaos verge on cockiness, even rudeness. Such personality problems as "identity crisis" or inferiority complex would be alien to his experience. The integration and the subsequent harmony of the individual and his society would appear so near total that probably no Maranao would dream, as indeed no Maranao in history appears to have dared, to revolt against Maranao society or to overthrow its system.

But then, perhaps, that statement is a bit too sweeping. One must admit that some Maranao youths today, apparently affected by non-Maranao lifestyles and values, do appear to act "delinquent" in the Maranao social context. They refuse to marry their parents' choice; they fall in love and hold hands in public and talk critically of Maranao ways. Some even refuse to dress as good Muslim women should dress and, worse, others indulge in drunkenness and drugs — none of which are especially pleasing to their elders. These phenomena certainly deserve further watching. Granted, for now, however, that these youthful delinquencies are stirrings to ruffle the enduring serenity of the great old Lake, still they may not be quite killer waterspouts to frighten older Maranaos. So far, at any rate, it appears that as these "rebellious" youths continue to live among their kind, they tend to gravitate to the mold and grow older to become perfectly settled and integrated adults in Maranao society.

Family Self-Esteem and Rank

Given the kind of family ties that the Maranaos have, one may not find much difficulty figuring out why the maratabat phenomenon should occur among them. To begin with, their deep-seated affirmation and commitment to the family and the special status that they have assigned to it as the "center of everything," added, moreover, to their provincialism, easily give cause for self-congratulations over what they consider to be the family's extraordinary worth. It also gives rise to the formulation of a "we're-the-best" sort of public egotism.[28] Few non-Maranaos fail to notice how Maranao self-appreciation, especially as it is manifested in Maranao country, tends to elbow its way into the ribs of the crowd, as it were, and imposes itself, coarsely if necessary, into everyone's attention.[29]

In the first place, it may well be an egotism that is no mere expression of one individual Maranao's vanity. Unlike the non-Maranao's self-esteem, it appears to be compounded with and intensified by the self-indulgence of the entire family. The Maranao individual, therefore, carries in his mind – and on his back – the self-esteem of the clan. In a manner of speaking, he is not being proud only of himself but of his family, too. And, even if he were not conscious of it, he would be, in addition, being proud for them.

But even this kind of egotism may still be said to be not entirely impossible among the non-Maranaos. What may be peculiar to the Maranao, however, is that this public self-esteem may not proceed only from a purely overblown belief in the family's extraordinary worth. It may be further intensified by the Marano's seriousness over the importance of his and his family's "social rank" in Maranao society.

Actually, Maranao society composes only two or three classes: 1) the *mapiya a taw* (literally, the "good people"), that is, the nobility or "the aristocratic datu class" claiming 'royal descent' which they call *bangsa*, and 2) the *mababa a taw* (the low people), a more polite euphemism for *sakop, bisaya* or *oripen.*'[30] Often, however, the *mapiya a taw* "is sub-divided by an almost indiscernible social gap"[31] composed of the following: The *pegawidan* ("supported"), "royal" or sultan class, consists of family lines traced to a common ancestor, at least Sarip Kabongsuan in Cotabato, but sometimes all the way up to Arabia and the Prophet, through his daughter Fatima.[32] ("Pretenders" to royalty can probably enter this elite class partly by doctoring the *salsila* [genealogical record] but mainly by proving their worth in terms of impressive wealth, community leadership and power.) The *pegawid* ("supporting") class is composed of families that may not be able to claim direct sultan-class ancestry, but do so to some line of descent that is consanguinally "royal." The third class compose the *bisaya.* These "slaves" can produce no convincing proof of a respectable lineage or exhibit any respectable show of wealth and power (in fact they exhibit gross poverty) and are therefore of no rank.[33]

On the basis of this class relations, it may be possible to raise the argument that Maranao social ranking, a system that seems to bring the greatest flattery to the greatest number of citizens,[34] may have grown out of the family self-indulgence itself, for self-serving ends. Thus it produced a peculiar society where the majority belongs to the nobility, the upperclass, served by an overworked minority of slaves. At any rate, it actually compounds, completes and validates — crowns, as it were – the Maranao family's self-congratulations that already prevails. And while it thus justifies that self-esteem, when carried as a kind of social seal or confirmation of the family's worth, it also serves, on the other hand, as a major source of even more pride.

Rank Assertion

In fact it is perhaps because of this ultrasensitivity to rank that the Maranao appears to popular observation to be more demonstrative of self-importance and demanding of special treatment than most other people.[35] From this view of non-Maranaos, the Maranao has a strong tendency to assert continually (often indirectly, but in emergencies rather grossly) the veracity of his and his family's "social rank" or at least social-rank connections in Maranao society. In common intercourse with non-Maranaos, this tendency may be observed in any one or more of these rather negative impressions, such impressions being always somehow more noticeable than the "good ones: the Maranao's bellicose speech habits, instinctive unwilingness to take orders especially from non-Maranaos, inability to accept criticism,[36] unsporting behavior over defeat, loud displeasure at being treated shabbily, refusal to do manual labor seriously,[37] and in other actions that show him working his way through to improve or at least maintain his public self-image. Conceivably, it is also present but not always very noticeable (except among more haughty *pegawidan* members) in the Maranao's more or less subdued but palpable air of "racial superiority" over non-Maranaos, including other Muslims but especially non-Muslims, when they are in Maranao territory. They, until recently, were all called "*bisaya*" (meaning, slave) regardless of ethnic distinction.[38] Explains Nagasura Madale: "To an outsider, such peculiar behavior and idiocyncracies [of the Maranao] can be interpreted as '*kayabangan*' [that is, Tagalog for "showing-offness"]. However, to a Maranao such behavior and idiocyncracies are [only] manifestations of rank consciousness."[39] There is little reason to doubt that Madale is probably aware that *kayabangan* has much to do with that consciousness in the first place.

Compulsive Wealth

But perhaps even more demonstrative of the Maranao's sensitivity over his rank and his corresponding sense of self-importance is his inclination for pompous display of achievement, wealth and power. Individual achievements like passing the bar, or the board, which, elsewhere, may call only for good handshakes and indigestion in private, become causes for big celebrations and heart-warming public demonstration of clannish pride and joy.[40] Even such otherwise quiet and humbling experience as the hadj becomes a status symbol calling for a family's public display of one-upmanship. Still, such occasional achievements, hard as they are to come by, may not be half as intensely attractive or as important to the Maranao as the more "lasting," more convincing and more unarguable achievement, luxury and show of economic affluence. Wealth — or at any rate the show of it — may be a compulsive status symbol that the Maranao appears to contemplate with great relish, respect and, often, deep envy. The fact may be that the show of wealth receives a higher premium in Maranao outlook. Besides the luxury it brings, it is almost tantamount

to it, if it does not indeed earn for one, the respect and recognition due to those possessing *pegawidan* rank and power. It is possible that a sultan's consanguinal legitimacy to royalty and power can be eroded in Maranao society by a corresponding want for conspicuous wealth. Penury on the sultan's part may be aggravated, moreover, by the shift of leadership power from the traditional sultan to the constitutional authority of mayors and the governor. The exception, of course, are the cases where the sultan has succeeded in also becoming a constitutional leader and, through this position, has consolidated and enlarged his and his family's assets.[41]

Obligatory Egotism

Finally, it may be that the society itself requires the Maranao to be "vain" about himself and over wealth: he must continually validate the truth of his claims through his very own assertions and insistence, or be regarded as unworthy of the rank. Baradas remarks: "one has to exert considerable effort to constantly validate one's rank [in the Mariano system] by consciously adopting a behavioral response which is conceived to correspond to the individual's perceived rank in any given time. The higher the rank, the greater the sense of maratabat (rank honor). Not to give evidence of it in terms of an outward behavioral display is to discredit oneself, and further imply that one's supposed claimed rank has really no basis. This constant and even redundant validation and affirmation of rank, in most explicit terms . . . is manifested in many ways."[42] Apparently, to the Maranaos, "protesting too much" about the claim does not render the truth of that claim dubious.

Indeed, at this point it probably only completes the picture to observe how Maranao society may not be exactly the sort that frowns upon conspicuous self-importance as something deplorable – except perhaps when it is exhibited by the unworthy, such as the slaves.[43] By and large, it appears to hold a very permissive view of this pleasurable privilege to preen one's feathers in public — or throw one's weight around. Conspicuous egotism, apparently, is so popular and evidently encouraged in the society that tends to aid, abet and reinforce the notion that it is a correct, proper and wholesome social conduct — even something obligatory of a *datu* worth his name.

Maratabat as Moral Institution

With this kind of egotism, so popular and so approved in his society, the Maranao could be only one breath or so away from creating the moral "ideology"[44] called maratabat. Basically, maratabat appears to be a notion of a whole and untarnished social self-image of a person and family of rank in a position to command respect and, in some cases, obedience. Saber, Tamano and Warriner say that the term "is often defined as the 'face' or 'amour propre' of the Maranao"[45] and add that Maranaos "frequently equate it with 'shame.'"[46] Therefore, "a man who has lost his maratabat has 'dirt on his face.'"[47] Depending on the degree of this dirti-

ness, he could become "very, very small," even a "nobody."[48] Add the authors: "The degree of maratabat expected of a person is directly proportional to social rank . . . [P]ersons of highest status [say, belonging to the sultan class] are expected to and do exhibit a zealous protection of their *maratabat*."[49]

With the Maranao's maratabat soiled, his former whole and untarnished image would be socially perceived to shatter and discolor. He would neither deserve nor receive the former glowing esteem of his relatives and friends, who themselves would be shamed. He would be terribly shamed, indeed, probably even ostracized and even compared to a slave — unless he succeeded in vindicating himself. Failing to gain redress by traditional and, nowadays, constitutional justice, which are often discharged with priorities of rank and personal relationships (and are thus often ignored),[50] he would be socially and morally obliged to gain "justice" by his own hand — that is, by terminating his offender with extreme prejudice via the traditional law of maratabat.[51] Succeeding in that, he would set into motion a somewhat internicine vicious cycle of "justified" maratabat liquidations and counter-killings which may encompass generations and ultimately satisfy no one. It would be ended only by some form of settlement, say a marriage or the like, moderated by some council of elders or sultan.[52]

Further examination of the maratabat phenomenon will be made shortly. For now it may be sufficient to note that maratabat appears to be the culmination and precipitation of the system of family relationship, attitude and self-esteem in Maranao society. As such, it may no longer be simply a notion of a social image, but can probably be described as a moral institution central to Maranao society. It involves the totality of an organic personal relationship in the Maranao social structure, social values and of course, social behavior. As a code of conduct, it could often overrule *adat*, Qur'anic and constitutional laws, revealing itself to be the most compelling moral obligation deserving the highest regard in Maranao society.[53]

Social Rank or Family Ties

Scholars who write on maratabat generally indicate the connection between family ties and self-esteem and this peculiar social phenomenon. But they tend to stress, instead, its connection with social rank consciousness. However, it may be suggested that the manifestations of maratabat, such as its loss and consequences, appear so organically related with the traditional kind and degree of family ties and self-esteem that said manifestations may not likely occur without the existence of this family phenomenon. It is even possible that the concept of maratabat may not have occurred in Maranao society without the special family bind and pride in question, even if family rank consciousness, per se, existed. Rank consciousness, by itself, in other words, may not necessarily bring about the reaction of a Batuampar and the subsequent counter-reaction of Sarosong's kins that extended down to the third generation.

To give a fairly distant example, 18th-century French gentlemen, who belonged to the large number of "royal" families and who were conscious of rank and distinction, settled insults in individual, face-to-face, man to man, relatively equal duels between insulter and insulted.[54] These duels often resulted in private homicides. Yet it did not seem to occur among them that insults unrepaid could be deductible from members of the family other than the individual offender himself. Neither had they thought that the son or grandson should pay in life or limb what has been owed by the original malefactor, who was their forebear. Such assumptions of family ramifications and interlinkings are essential portions only of Maranao maratabat (but probably not exclusive to it). The fact may be that these European gentlemen, conscious of family rank but brought up under a different sort and degree of family ties and values, did not — as Maranaos do — consider personal (individual) affronts as necessarily also quite as much family injuries. In their assumptions, there must have existed a distinction between the individual and his family, a distinction which may be virtually non-existent among Maranaos.

In fact the moral burden enforced by maratabat on the individual appears to be essentially the moral burden a Maranao bears on account of his family ties and family self-esteem, but which has been precipitated — glamorized, as it were — into a more palpable matter of social rank. It may be possible also to say, for example, that if maratabat were a question of shame, it may be, basically, shame for not reacting "properly," according to tradition, over what, in the eyes of society, has been done to oneself or to one's family members — thus, to one's family. It is shame for not acting as an honorable and socially-respectable person or as a truly loving and loyal father, brother, son, uncle, nephew, etc., should act, under the circumstances, that is, by dramatizing the obligatory severe retaliatory reaction expected to arise from an equally obligatory loss of reason and self-control as one is supposed to be overwhelmed with disgust or grief. (Being so overwhelmed appears to dramatize the intensity of one's passion and love for one's family.) Shame, in this interpretation, is not so much in the "dirt," per se, that soils the purity of the family maratabat but in one's inability, as a family member, to demonstrate as soon as possible the proper, socially-accepted reaction to the insult. In effect, this places maratabat back into the matrix of what is probably a very old and indigenous mentality among a people who will later be known as Filipinos, perhaps even among Indo-Malays: the tendency to take deep personal offense readily over real or imagined "insults" and the profound obligatory (and sometimes long-festering) urge for revenge over injuries, especially on the family.[55] Moreover, that this burden is more than just a question of rank may be evident in the fact that while maratabat is apparently a manifestation of rank consciousness, its expression is socially permitted not only among the *pegawidan*, but also among the next "nobler" class, who constitute the majority of Maranaos. Except perhaps for the slaves, practically all members of the society, in which every person of any worth is a family member, are entitled and expected to and do profess to wear and exhibit, albeit in various degrees of

solemnity, that unbearably delicate clean "face" of honor.[56]

The above propositions, however, should not be construed to mean that sensitivity to social rank is only an ostensible reason for and therefore is only skin-deep in maratabat. In fact that sensitivity may be making maratabat what it is. Among other Filipinos who were or are equally committed to deep family ties and profound violence over personal and family injuries, there is no maratabat (that is, no Maranao type of maratabat) because there is no corresponding consciousness of what is equivalent in kind and degree to the Maranao's sensitivity to the family's social rank. Among those French gentlemen cited as example, there was sensitivity to social rank, but no maratabat or its equivalent because this sensitivity was no essential part of especially-close family ties that fail to distinguish the individual from the group. The point, therefore, is that Maranao sensitivity to social rank happens to exist not independently but is organically grown out of the special Maranao family ties.

Maratabat Morality

In sum, maratabat may well be the most forceful, essential and central moral canon in Maranao society. It may be the "psychological substance" that makes the Maranao. It is probably *the* Maranao code of conduct and *the* Maranao law. After many generations, it appears to have become the ultimate indigenous creation of that human *kota*, the Maranao family society, that encloses the clan warriors, ladies and children within deep trenches and *palsangs*, as it were, against what it regards as a hostile outside world. Maratabat, therefore, can probably be described as primeval pure: as the Batuampar-Sarosong case shows, it is original, visceral, immediate and unsophisticated, unencumbered by "philosophical" considerations and probably untouched by external influence. Yet it is an unwritten code of conduct and of law that appears to have become so full-grown in its significance and application that it tenaciously affects — perhaps, from one point of view, almost imprisons — the entire complex fabric of the Maranao psyche, that responds to it with alacrity and regards it, almost, as the more private kind of religion.[57]

As such, it appears to simplify basic Maranao social morality: maratabat could be a notion to which the Maranao is instinctively true, first and foremost; all other moral values and laws to which he also subscribes may have been acquired from Islam, Filipino and Western standards of behavior. He may accept sincerely many of the latter values and laws and has made them so much a part of him that even he cannot tell when they were foreign. Yet when there is urgency, especially in those instances of contradiction between these values and marabat, and when he finds himself in Lanao among his *pagares* (brothers) and fellow Maranaos, he will probably readily and unerringly know how "foreign" they are indeed, as they vaporize in the heat of his blood, leaving him only the one moral cause and one sure law for action, which he recognizes to have been always there as his very own.

If maratabat were therefore so indigenous and primeval and so basic to the Maranao psychology,it would be useful to attempt defining what its morality consists of. Perhaps, as a rule of thumb, maratabat morality can be simply described as follows: that which benefits the family (and its self-esteem) is good; that which does not is evil — or at least is of no importance. The crucial question on the matter may be: what sort of moral assumptions are involved in these "benefit" and "self-esteem"?

Non-Maranaos, both Christian and Muslim, tend to assume that the maratabat concept of shame or "dirt in the face" would resemble their own moral concept of a stain in one's character. In their view, being found to be quite dishonest, for example, or selfish, ruthless, greedy, unfair, unjust, corrupt or in any other way wicked — according to their own moral standards — would, or at any rate should, be such a stain, regardless of any family correlations. Subsequently, this stain, from the point of view of the non-Maranao, would tend to compromise if not ruin one's prestige, integrity and honor and, conceivably, one's self-esteem as well — assuming, of course, that all these proceed from having maintained one's social "virtues" rather than from having simply maintained one's social rank and publicly accepted material affluence.

In fact it is possible that no such moral concept can be found necessarily in maratabat. Maratabat may involve the matter of stain in one's character and shame — often, great shame. It may involve the matter of prestige, integrity, honor and self-esteem But the maratabat assumption over these matters and on the sort of "stain" and "immorality" that can ruin them may not necessarily consist of quite the same items that are conceived by the non-Maranao to be and to do such things.[58] Preceding paragraphs have already tried to describe what maratabat "shame" may consist of (failing to act "properly" as an honorable person in society or as a good family member should) and what in maratabat may constitute prestige, integrity, honor and self-esteem (family relations, connections, rank, wealth, power and public acknowledgement of these). Indeed, if the "virtues" of honesty, selflessness, fairness, incorruptibility, justice and the like were made part of the essential maratabat phenomenon, they may be so included not for their own sakes but only incidentally to the all-important family's loyalty and pride. Thus if the non-Maranao would be stained and shamed in his character for those failings, per se, that he considered iniquitous, the Maranao would be stained and shamed, apparently, not for these same "iniquities" but for some other kind of "sin" — mainly, the great sin of failing the family maratabat. (In the case of the "marginal" Maranao, who straddles both values of the non-Maranao and the Maranao, it is quite possible for him to feel vividly for himself, apart from the family, the non-Maranao's non-maratabat shame. But, away from the non-Maranao social context and protected deeply in Maranao society, he may not be able to feel half as ashamed or as remorseful as he would if he were feeling the shame that went with maratabat.)

In other words, it may be that while the greatest good in maratabat is that which renders the greatest benefit to the family, this benefit or "good" may not *necessarily* include those finer points that the non-Maranao considers "moral" and "proper." Neither may this "benefit" be obtained necessarily by means of what the non-Maranao would describe as "moral" and "just" means. In fact this "benefit" *may* include and exhibit qualities that non-Maranaos may judge to be morally reprehensible and disgraceful. Yet this family "benefit" in question, seen from the maratabat standpoint, may be quite "moral" and socially acceptable among Maranaos. It may not in any way compromise or damage the prestige, integrity, honor and self-esteem of the person or his family — precisely because it affirms his family's or clan's well-being.[59] It may well be that to the Maranao, giving what he conceives to be happiness and comfort to the family *is* the highest form of morality. It is his moral obligation, regardless of how non-Maranao moral precepts and perceptions might judge the means that he employs. With that kind of end being so "good" and all-important, in his view, the means, in diametrical opposition, becomes only half as "bad," or at any rate half as important and, in moral "color," is consistently neutral gray.

It appears therefore that the Maranao in his maratabat does not necessarily assume the same moral values that the non-Maranao assumes, although his maratabat may superficially include some of them. Perhaps it is this discrepancy between the two moral assumptions that should explain for the non-Maranao why the Maranao, who on the one hand is hypersensitive about prestige, integrity and honor can, on the other hand, appear extremely calloused while doing, often quite publicly, what appears to the non-Maranao to be grossly dishonorable and ignominious deeds that for shame would (or at any rate, should) drive him, if he were the doer, into the bottom of the Lake, not to speak of the bottom of the earth.

Of course, the Maranao is not ignorant of the moral scruples of the non-Maranao. So much has been said a few paragraphs ago. Also, he may even feel scandalized over any suggestion that his maratabat lacks these scruples. So much "in the inside of things," he may not even be aware of what maratabat is essentially about. Moreover, one does not forget that the Maranao, after all, probably believes himself to be following devoutly the moral precepts of Islam, perhaps so devoutly as to think nothing of dying for these. Yet, just the same, there are legions of Filipinos who believe themselves to be devout Christians and who would claim to be quite willing to die for their religion. But from much observable actuations, they tend to appear to be not quite as willing and able to *live* down that religion even for a single day. And for his part the Maranao, as Muslim, may not be too far behind that line of behavior himself. Furthermore, it can probably be said that even if he were not conscious of it, the Maranao may fully apprehend that these values are not quite basically Maranao values. He may approve them to be "good" for as long as they do not contradict or inhibit maratabat or the expression of his loyalty to the

family and its well-being. When they do begin to inhibit and contradict maratabat and that family, then they easily become, in a sense, not so good any longer.

Maratabat Law

It is probably easy to see how, being the Maranao's basic code of conduct, maratabat would also happen to be his basis for law. However, as "law" distinguished from moral codes, happens to carry with it the prescription of "redress" and "justice," its application among the Maranaos may be further described as follows. Ironically, the law of maratabat, unwritten as it happens to be, can probably get quite "lawless." In extreme cases, it apparently calls for no police, attorneys, *wakils*, judges, or kalis to uphold it, even if these officials palpably exist as part of present-day Maranao traditional and constitutional systems. In the first place, these authorities of law and justice, representing Philippine constitutional and Islamic laws, appear, in their capacities and functions, to be unable to recognize maratabat as legitimate. Their laws have not taken maratabat into account or systematized it to become part of their body of jurisprudence.[60] They are, in effect, functioning as outsiders among a people responding primarily to maratabat law. More often, therefore, in the "negative" instances of its expression, maratabat calls for the law of one's hands, as it always has — provided that one has sufficient maratabat motives.

With that motive clearly established, the aggrieved Maranao is apparently socially justified to bushwhack an offender or any of his proper male relations. It is not that Maranao society, which may be largely unrelated consanguinally to either side of the conflicting parties and therefore is impartial, approves the action with cheers. Probably, it would even prevent the slaughter if it could. But its disapproval of the imminent violence may be mingled with a grim acceptance of the "morality" that the maratabat motives of the offended party is "justified." Therefore, taking no special effort to prevent maratabat-related aggressions, it largely allows them to take place. The public appears to hold the notion that the preventive measures must be undertaken not by society but by the kins themselves of the prospective victim.

Should the aggrieved party wreak his vengeance in public, surprised bystanders and passersby simply give room, as quickly as they could under the circumstances, to avoid being hit by stray bullets or stained with spurts of blood — or so, at least, appears to be the usual public reaction under the circumstances. Then they generally let things lie where they fall. They may not be sure that the deed was motivated by maratabat, but they probably assume that it may be. The police, modern trappings of the new government system, is generally summoned to the scene, but probably only ostensibly to apprehend a public offender. It appears more likely that the police arrives to bring official witness to the mayhem, pick up the bloody mess on the ground and bring it to where it belongs. In the absence of the victim's relations, it is somewhat considered, by tacit public consent, to be vested with the authority and the responsibility to cart away the body.

Meantime, the assailant has already escaped before their arrival. This discreet disappearance probably spares the officers (who may come slowly enough not to find the proverbial smoking gun) from the unpleasant task of having to arrest him when they, as private persons, feel that it should be no business of theirs and would be hazardous for them to interfere. The assault or killing would be recorded in the blotter and, as a matter of bureaucratic form, an investigation may even be initiated. But it may not be too temerarious to suggest that not even the police seriously believes that efforts should be made to capture and administer constitutional justice on the suspect, who may have acted on the time-honored tradition of maratabat. That job, everyone knows, belongs to the victim's own police, who happen to be his relatives, with their maratabat, and who, naturally enough, would very probably file no criminal complaint in court about the killing but would expect to bring maratabat justice to the assailant in the same traditional form by which they have lost their own family member.

Being thus as "lawless" as maratabat law could become, it nonetheless appears to be followed solemnly and strictly by the traditionalist Maranaos. It may not be thoroughly outrageous to remark that, essentially to the Maranaos, no law that applies to matters involving life, limb and reputation is obeyed more anxiously and more gravely than the law of maratabat. With regard to the Qur'anic and constitutional laws, the Maranaos seem to go through the motions of following them as part of religious duty, social acceptability and citizenship, and as a means of settling minor disputes. But for the truly serious conflicts that may arise among them, they always depend, apparently, on their own basic traditional methods. Notwithstanding that Saber, Tamano and Warriner consider maratabat to be "legal in terms of traditional and customary laws," more often it appears that maratabat is itself *the* essential and supreme law of the Maranaos.[61]

Maratabat and the Non-Maranao

Up to this point, this paper has attempted to explain what may be the essential causes of those particular "portions of *[*Maranao*]* behavior" that, from the standpoint of the non-Maranao, "seems least explicable by common-sense assumptions and understanding." What remains to be described now are the corresponding effects of maratabat on the non-Maranao living among the Maranaos in the Maranao home country.

One thing that can probably be said about these effects is that they tend to put the non-Maranao in a somewhat compromising and in many cases hazardous position. Yet, probably they can also be described as fairly subtle. At first, they may not be discernible even to the subject, especially when he is a newcomer. Described offhand, they could even strike the prospective victim, not to speak of the Maranaos themselves, as bordering on the incredible. In fact, in one sense, they may not be excessive at all. They may occur quite selectively — in particular circumstances

only — and therefore are few and far between in the visitor's experience. When they do occur, however, they seem to possess an unmitigated starkness that cannot be mistaken for anything else and may strike the victim, if he were still conscious, and his fellow non-Maranaos as more than convincing enough. But perhaps they are not so much subtle as, in the words of Macaraya describing the maratabat phenomenon, "'dormant' in the socio-psychological milieu of Maranao society" and become clearly operative only when triggered by some appropriate social or individual mechanism.[62] These "socio-psychological" boobytraps, as it were, will be described after the succeeding paragraphs have tried to show why they occur.

Essentially, the non-Maranao's gross disadvantage in Maranao society appears to be simply the fact that he is not and cannot be a Maranao. As previously mentioned, he has no Maranao family connections in Maranao society, no Maranao social rank and consequently no maratabat. He possesses none of those qualities that, among the people of the Lake, make someone an honorable person — in short, a Maranao. Hard as it may be for a Maranao to admit publicly, the non-Maranao, especially when he is also a non-Muslim, can probably occupy no other status in Maranao society except that of a slave *(bisaya)*. He is not entirely a slave, per se, as slavery is apparently no longer quite a living institution among the Maranaos. He is only consigned to that status, albeit not deliberately but in a kind of unspoken general assumption.

Never mind that he may be a person who has achieved a high level of education and expertise, practicing superior hygiene (a *maimo*), breeding and moral scruples, or is perhaps rich in his own home region or country. Never mind that he may have a high level of self-esteem that is tantamount in degree, if not in kind, to maratabat pride; or indeed, very obviously, that he is a stranger who may subscribe to different values and class distinctions elsewhere and, for that matter, may need not be pigeonholed into any Maranao class. Never mind, even, that he may have never thought of himself as a slave at any time in his life — or that he is, in official functions, the Maranaos' superior. All these considerations, apparently, are unimportant under the circumstances. The fact is that he is in Maranao country. Being so, he is inevitably subject to and must fit Maranao tradition and law — and it is just too bad that he is not a Maranao. In a kind of paradox, his personal categorization is "nothing personal." In this mensuration, he must inevitably come out as having no Maranao blood relations, no social rank and no maratabat and therefore must be a person of no consequence — a non-personality, a "non-entity."[63] as Baradas would say, indeed a *bisaya*.

Of course, the case of the non-Maranao Muslims in Mindanao and from Sulu may be somewhat different. Maranaos tend to pay lip service to their kinship among the earlier Maguindanaos, whose descendants today must be recognized as distant cousins possessing their own kind of "maratabat." Yet Maranaos appear to understand perfectly that Maguindanaos are not Maranaos and that only Maranaos

have *the* Maranao maratabat. As for the Tausogs, Samals and other Muslim ethnic groups, they are not distant cousins of the Maranao. But since Islam has enjoined all Muslims, without exception, to accept all other Muslims not just as friends but as brothers in religion, it is therefore pretty hard to publicly consign one's brothers to the status of slaves. Still, on certain occasions that are also cases of emergency, especially when no non-Muslim non-Maranao is on hand as a sacrificial lamb, a Tausog or a Samal appears to serve the purpose just as well — and a Maguindanao may be none too far ahead under the circumstances.[64]

But to return to the non-Muslim non-Maranao. Few of them who may not have fallen victim yet to maratabat effects may readily admit this unflattering assignment to the slave status. Yet, probably, fewer among those who have lived in Lanao for a relatively long time will admit that they have not been witnesses to cases of non-Muslim non-Maranaos like themselves who, as minorities in Lanao, have been victims of discrimination in employment, promotions, facilities and conveniences of work and living conditions, benefits and all-around fairness in general, which Maranao relatives with little excuse breeze through with even less effort. Perhaps even fewer will admit that they have not been aware of cases of non-Muslim non-Maranaos who have been threatened, extorted, robbed, kidnapped or murdered in a proportion that is considerably much higher compared with Maranao victims in a place where Maranaos are the overwhelming majority. But the subject's reluctance to admit that he has been relegated to the "slave" status may not come so much from the unflattering quality of that status itself. Rather, it may proceed from his degree of sensitivity and from his immediate, day-to-day living experience, which probably provides little evidence to show that he has been obviously and quite palpably "oppressed" by the majority in the society.

The reason perhaps why he has not felt so oppressed is that he has assumed that having that status among the Maranaos means being looked down upon, suppressed and discriminated against every day of one's life and at every turn of one's way. That, incidentally, happens to be the case with slaves elsewhere in the past, especially in America, or with non-slaves like the *harijans* in India, or with blacks in white-controlled parts of Africa. And that, of course, is the popular notion about the status of slaves in history and in the world.

In fact, having that status among the Maranaos, especially in this day and age, means nothing of the kind. In the first place, it has already been mentioned that slavery as an institution seems to have largely disappeared from Maranao society as a result of modernization. In the second place, Maranao slaves in the past, like other slaves in Mindanao and Sulu, have not been as oppressed, abused and discriminated against as their counterparts in America and elsewhere.[65] People having the status of slaves today in Maranao society appear, relatively, to be exceedingly free creatures; no one among them is even called a slave any more. It may even be said that the status is hardly discernible to the "slaves" themselves, which explains

why its effects on them can be subtle. Up to a fairly high level of social tolerance, they can talk, act, dress, get rich and live comfortably as well as, even more than, any Maranao can, if they had the means to do so. With the Maranaos, they can largely transact business on equal terms, take the same seat with the ladies, eat on the same table, be invited to Maranao feasts and weddings, become close friends of Maranao individuals and on many occasions treated completedly as equals, or even become the Maranaos' superior in bureaucratic and other official functions. Almost nothing exists in Maranao society that oppresses, suppresses, or discriminates the non-Maranao non-Muslim into the feeling that he is regarded as a slave.

In fact it is possible to suspect that with the demise of slavery in Lanao, people who are referred to rather pessimistically in this paper as occupying the status of slaves are actually "free men." Still, free as they may be in their own existential consciousness, in Maranao society they occupy a *status* that may not quite carry that label. In Maranao society, it appears that the otherwise emancipated "slaves" cannot be seriously re-classified or promoted to a freeman-workers class or the like, because no such class exists or is being made to exist, with its corresponding special privileges, in the traditionally closed, kinship-oriented Maranao society. Neither has Maranao society, which operates from traditional motivations and not from conscious enactments, made special provisions for or a special status out of resident outsiders as some kind of visiting freeman-workers, with corresponding rights and privileges. Other than a relative freedom to stay and work in Lanao, resident outsiders appear to have no special privileges at all and are subject to Maranao traditional law built along kinship lines.

In effect, it is possible to describe them as coming to work at their own risk. The nearest group to the theoretical freemen class among Maranaos appears to be the *pegawid*, which has its privileges in the society. But members of this majority class have the basic requisite – consanguinal relations that entitle them to their rank and maratabat. The freeman-resident outsiders have no such consanguinal relations whatsoever and therefore cannot have rank or maratabat. Consequently, no matter how often or how loudly these non-*pegawidan* and non-*pegawid* non-slaves may be called by the name of "free men," or any other name of similar import, in Maranao society they simply fall subject to all the liabilities that once belonged to the slaves – plus other liabilities now belonging to ex-slaves. In other words, they hold the status of what Warriner describes as the Maranao "freed slave": one who "does not . . . acquire any rights or privileges or claims on land or *even existence*. In a sociological sense he *doesn't exist* for though he may no longer have to do his master's bidding he has no claim on participation in a community [underscoring supplied]."[66] In short, "free" as they may happen to be, they are, ironically, something somewhat worse than slaves, having less than a slave's privileges, which were almost nil to begin with, and more than his share of corresponding liabilities, which were plenty.

And what may these liabilities be? What may be the maratabat effects that could fall on the non-Maranao for having no maratabat? Or what, in Maranao country, happens to be the compromising and hazardous aspects of being a non-Maranao?

In this paper, there is space only for a few generalized answers; the details may have to be worked out elsewhere. Apparently, one of these answers is: that he is denied the only protection recognized by all Maranaos to be the all-purpose *kota* to safeguard a Maranao's rights, privileges, respectability, honor and life as a human being in Lanao – Maranao family connections. Not that he is persecuted in or by Maranao society – far from it. More often, he is even welcomed in the society. Rather, he is simply *not protected* in it, because he does not belong, or because, as Warriner says, in this society he "does not exist."[67] And, moreover, in a world where rightness rests easily on the mighty in rank, number and consanguinal relations, he is perpetually condemned to be wrong. Any day, therefore, may be declared open season by one or more individual *mama* who, compelled by some form of desperation or other and without necessarily the blessings of Maranao society, may find it "exigent" (or "expedient") and, sometimes, justifiable along maratabat lines, to take away by force the non-Maranao's claims for rights, privileges, respectability and honor – even life. The offense is generally made with little or no qualms because, under Maranao traditional view, a non-Maranao possesses none of these social rights and privileges – mainly because he has no relatives and maratabat to assert with blood and arms that he does in fact possess them. As human beings possessed with fraternal feelings for the species, individual members of Maranao society may not approve of the violation. But the society itself is likely to do nothing to prohibit or redress it – because the non-Maranao is no relative, has no maratabat and in effect "does not exist." So orphaned and unrelated, and so exposed to the elements, as it were, the non-Maranao, according to the relativity of "exigency" and, at times, maratabat justification, becomes fair game for all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, including outrageous death, in Lanao, a victim over whom precious few are ready to shed tears.

But of course these "exigent" consequences do not happen to the non-Maranao every day. They may not even happen to him in all his lifetime in Maranao country, which is otherwise also peopled with very humane individuals, although he may see it happen to others like him at some time or another. These are only consequences that *could* happen to him and *would* happen to him if and when the perfect combination of circumstances made them "exigent" so as to designate him the next victim. The whole thing could mean his death, of course, but as has been previously mentioned, it could be "nothing personal" at all.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mamitua Saber and Mauyag M. Tamano with Charles K. Warriner, "The Maratabat of the Maranao," *The Maranao*, ed. Mamitua Saber and Abdullah T. Madale (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1975), p. 88. Originally in *Philippine Sociological Review*, VIII, 1-2 (January-April 1960), 10-15, Also rpt. *The Muslim Filipinos*, ed. Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974), pp. 230-284.

2. Melvin Mednick suggests that maratabat is non-operational with Maranaos among non-Maranaos (p. 187, 1980), adding the phenomenon is confined to organized Maranao society (p. 187). While his statement may be true with regard to Maranaos living outside of their own society, it appears that Dr. Mednick may not have been speaking of non-Maranaos who in fact may be living in that society and are therefore completely subject to the manifestations of maratabat.

3. Peter G. Gowing, "Recent Scholarship on the Muslim Filipinos: A Survey and Some Suggestions," *The Muslim Filipinos*, ed. Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974), p. 303.

4. Mamitua Saber, "Maranao Social and Cultural Transition," *The Muslim Filipinos*, ed. Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis (1974), p. 220.

5. Dr. Saber's short editorial, "The Backward Side of Maratabat," *Maranao Progress* (April 30, 1961), criticizes vendetta as un-Islamic and undemocratic but does not touch on the subject's effects on the non-Maranao.

6. Indeed, neither is it for the Maranao in non-Maranao country, but perhaps for different reasons, possibly: plain traditional prejudice, or the backlash to known Maranao behavior over non-Maranaos in Maranaoland. It is a topic, indeed, that could be further explored elsewhere.

7. *The Moro Problem* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1913).

8. The moro as "a creature of myth and fable" is described by Charles K. Warriner, "Myths, Moros and the Maranao," *The Maranao*, ed. Mamitua Saber and Abdullah T. Madale, esp. in pp. 33-34. Originally in *Exchange News Quarterly*, 10 (1950).

9. Hilario M. Gomez, Jr., has made studies in line with this ethnic interaction, e.g., in his "A Christian Approach to the Maranao Muslims" (unpublished M.S. Thesis, Southeast Asian Graduate School of Theology, Silliman University, 1969) and "Studying Attitudes of Muslims in the Philippines," *Silliman Journal*, XIX, 4 (4th quarter, 1972), 425-443. However, he has yet to include the perceptions of present-day non-Maranao residents on Maranaoland about what Maranaos tend to do to them.

10. Carlton L. Riemer, "Maranao Maratabat and the Concept of Pride, Honor and Self-Esteem," *Dansalan Research Center Occasional Papers*, 4 (May 1976).

11. Observes Disoma: "[T/he claim that maratabat is unique to the Maranao does not rest on solid grounds" (p. 51), mainly because it is not proven by com-

parative cross-ethnic and, ideally, quantifying research. However, in probably no less uncertain grounds, Disoma himself concludes that maratabat is indeed not exclusive to the Maranao. His argument: equivalent terms and the concept itself also exist among Maguindanaos, Tausogs and Samals, and that "vindictiveness and violence," supposed qualities identified with maratabat, are also institutions among other Filipino ethnic groups. A quantificational rather than a pontifical scholar, Disoma apparently refuses to entertain the possibility that the concept of maratabat by the other scholars who wrote on the Maranao may not be exactly the same concept that his Maguindanao and Tausog-Samal respondents had in mind, although the terms may be similar, and that the Maranao-related maratabat may involve something more than just vengeance and violence. See Ismael R. Disoma, "The Concept of Maratabat in Maranao Society: A Sociological Interpretation." M.A. Thesis, University of the Philippines, Diliman, 1982. (Unpublished)

12. Saber, Tamano and Warriner, p. 89.

13. Saber, Tamano and Warriner, p. 92.

14. Melvin Mednick, pp. 190-191.

15. Riemer, pp. 11, 17, 18.

16. Inocente N. Javier, "Maratabat and Collective Responsibility," *Mindanao Art & Culture*, 4 (1980), 84.

17. Or "kinship-oriented," says Mamitua Saber, "The Transition from a Traditional to a Legal Authority System: A Philippine Case." Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence, 1967; reproduced in mimeograph, University Research Center, Mindanao State University, Marawi City, p. 177.

18. Especially with respect to maratabat, see discussion of Maranao social pressure on the individual, in Saber, Tamano and Warriner, pp. 92-93.

19. "To the Maranao, many children means more power, more money, higher prestige, and larger kinship network," say Doris M. Dinoro and F.V. Magdalena, "A Note on Family Size Preference and Aspirations Among the Maranao," *Mindanao Journal*, VI, I (July-September 1979), 4. See also Jimmy V. Balacuit, "Factors Affecting the Attitude of the Maranaos Toward Family Planning." A Report to the Southeast Asia Population Research Awards Program, 1979. (Unpublished)

20. "The kin-centered relationships of the Maranaos have made them a very closely knit group . . ." — David B. Baradas, "Some Implications of the Okir Motif in Lanao and Sulu Art," *The Muslim Filipinos: A Book of Readings*, ed. Nagasura T. Madale, (Quezon City: Alemar-Phoenix Publishing House, 1981), p. 183. Originally in *Asian Studies*, VI, 2 (August 1968) and *Philippine Studies* (August 1968), 129-150.

21. A "'culture island' . . . within the general structure of the whole Philippine society." — Mamitua Saber, "Marginal Leadership in a Culture-Contact Situation." M.A. Thesis, University of Kansas, Lawrence, 1957; pp. 20-21.

Speaking of Maranao maratabat, Carlton L. Riemer adds: "consciously or un-

consciously — perhaps by intuition — [they] defend themselves against, and . . . pursue their own interests in, what they perceive to be a hostile world." (p. 47)

Also cf.: "They dwell close together in the same congested places or houses due to mutual aid in the performance of different activities and for protecgion against common enemies. In the past, the Maranaos have been threatened repeatedly by enemy attack . . ." — Mamitua Saber and Abdullah T. Madale, "Health and Medical Problems Among the Maranaos," *Mindanao Journal*, III, 2 (October-December 1976), 87. MJ volume is a second edition of *Muslim Philippines*, ed. Antonio Isidro and Mamitua Saber (Marawi City: URC-Mindanao State University, 1968).

22. Mamitua Saber says: "In the *pangampong* [a Lanao "state"] a community member is Maranao-born. It is [a] restricted or closed society." "Bureaucratic Values Versus Cultural Values," Mindanao Journal, I, 4 (April-June 1975), 6.

In another work, he adds: "[F]or reason of their distinct religion and culture, [the Maranaos] have a feeling and sentiment of we-group-ness which, more or less, isolates them from the larger group." — "Marginal Leadership in a Culture-Contact Situation," p. 18.

23. Saber calls it also "ethnocentrism," "agamaism," or "'villagism'." — "Marginal Leadership in a Culture-Contact Situation," p. 21.

24. Saber: "the center of everything." In "Marginal Leadership in a Culture-Contact Situation," p. 18.

25. Far from his people, however, the individual Maranao can even forget maratabat and be a friend of a sworn enemy. Say Saber, Tamano and Warriner: "Finally it is important to note that when persons [Maranao individuals] are acting outside of Maranao society and without reference to it the *maratabat* feelings and *maratabat* responsibilities cease to exist. We have a case of blood enemies in Lanao who are friends in Manila when no other Maranao are around." (p. 92)

26. Saber, Tamano and Warriner, pp. 91, 94.

27. Says Riemer: "The concept of *maratabat* involves notions of self-respect, self-esteem and personal pride. Normally these notions are considered part of a well-adjusted, properly integrated human personality." (p. 3)

Later he points out how maratabat gives the individual "a strong sense of self-identity and a very secure sense of belonging." (p. 18)

28. This tendency is not peculiar to Maranaos (perhaps not even to Philippine Islanders, for that matter). Other ethnocentric, provincial groups in the Philippines (possibly Ilocanos, Ilongos, Chavacanos, etc., including urban Tagalogs) are popularly recognized — even stereotyped — to entertain feelings of ethnic superiority to others, although this egotism may have gradually diminished among many individuals with the convenience of travel and more intimate inter-ethnic associations, such as take place on Mindanao island. In the case of the Maranao, however, the feeling of superiority may be based on more than just family centrism and provincialism.

29. The apparent "insolence of the people," as Baradas describes it which, says Riemer, "is really an expression of *maratabat*." Besides quoting David Baradas

above (from "Conflict in the 'Land of Promise'," *Philippine Sociological Review*, XX, 4 [1962] 365), Riemer also quotes Hayden (pre-quoted by Mednick), who observed how "More than 100 petty datus swagger about among 100,000 Maranao, no one of them admitting the existence of any native political superior. Each datu is jealous of the other and zealous in maintaining his own power and prestige." — Riemer, p. 22.

30. Mamitua Saber and Mauyag M. Tamano, "Decision-Making and Social Change in Rural Moroland," Community Research Council Study, Series No. 16, University of the Philippines, Diliman, 1961 (Unpublished). Quoted portion is found under "Chapter IV: Maranao Traditional Society and Government," section on "Social Classes." (Text was read by this writer from galley proofs, the original being unavailable.)

See also Melvin Mednick, *Encampment of the Lake*, for Maranao social organization.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Mamitua Saber, "Marginal Leadership in a Culture-Contact Situation," p. 35; also in his "Leadership Among the Maranaws" (attached as "Appendix A" to the preceding work), p. 68.

33. "The 'slave class' is a mere category of persons, not an organized group . . ." — Mamitua Saber, "The Effects of American Rule Upon the Maranao Muslim Elite," Paper read at the 4th National Conference on Social History," Cebu City, November 27-29, 1981; p. 3. (Unpublished)

In terms of family connections, "[the category of slaves] can hardly be called a line of descent for they have no *bangsa* (the ancestors); no claims to rights and duties; it is, thus, a non-line." — Charles K. Warriner, "Myth and Reality in the Social Structure," *The Maranao*, ed. Mamitua Saber and Abdullah T. Madale; p. 41.

34. Mamitua Saber, "Leadership Among the Maranaos," p. 70.

35. In constrast, the Tausogs, who also have a social stratification that corresponds in some respects to that of the Maranao are said to have none of the same degree of sensitivity over rank. See Thomas M. Kiefer, "The Tausog Polity and the Sultanate of Sulu: A Segmentary State in the Southern Philippines," *The Muslim Filipinos: A Book of Readings*, ed. Nagasura T. Madale; p. 71. (Originally in *Sulu Studies*, I, 1972.)

36. Riemer: "touchy and defensive" over criticism (p. 43).

37. However, Riemer writes — dubiously, it may seem to some — that "high-ranking Maranaos would do menial tasks and manual labor . . . in other areas of the country, where no other Maranao know or see what they are doing — jobs such as stevedore, waiter/waitress, car mechanic, clothes washer, etc." (p. 24)

In this connection, Inocente N. Javier notes that working as a housemaid anywhere is considered degrading by Maranaos (p. 83).

38. Saber and Tamano state: "There seems to be no conclusive evidence that the Maranao *bisaya* refers to Visayan captives who became slaves" ("Decision-

Making and Social Change in Rural Moroland"), Hilario M. Gomez, Jr., contradicts this statement ("Studying Attitudes of Muslims in the Southern Philippines," p. 437.) and Reynaldo C. Ileto agrees with Gomez (see Ileto's *Maguindanao, 1860-1888: the Career of Datu Uto of Duayan*, Southeast Asian Program Data Paper # 82 [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1971], p. 24).

In fact, *bisaya* is also a term used for slaves not only by the rank-sensitive Maranaos but even by the Tausogs, who also use *banyaga* and *ipun ammas* to refer to slaves. (Thomas M. Kiefer, "The Tausog Polity and the Sultanate of Sulu: A Segmentary State in the Philippines," The Muslim Filipinos: A Book of Readings, ed. Nagasura T. Madale, p. 71.) It appears that Maranaos used to call all non-Muslim non-Maranaos "*bisaya*" probably because in the Maranao mind these outsiders were grouped altogether with the Visayans, the majority of non-Muslim non-Maranaos in Lanao and elsewhere in Mindanao, whom Maranaos meet most often.

Still, even if Saber and Tamano were right, does this fact necessarily invalidate the statements of Ileto and Gomez on the question? More discussion on the *bisaya* and the *Bisaya* is made later in this paper.

Incidentally, Maranaos today no longer call the non-Maranao non-Muslim "*bisaya*" but "Christian" *(Ki-RIS tian)*, a general term that applies to all non-Maranao non-Muslim non-pagans. They now distinguish people in Lanao as "Maranao" *and "Christian," mixing the ethnic with the religious category. The change of name* may have coincided with these "Christians" also having begun to call the Maranaos "Maranaos" or "Muslims" instead of "moros." Incidentally, being called "Christian," a non-derogatory term, is more flattering than being called "Filipino," which refers to the subjugated Spanish-colonized groups, but which is kinder than "*katsila*" (Spaniard), which is close to "unbeliever" or "*kapir*" (Arabic, *kafir*), which is probably more derogatory than "*bisaya.*"

39. Nagasura T. Madale, "Aspects of Maranao Turitib and Adat as Reflected in *Radia Indarapatra,*" Papers on the Codification of Muslim Customary (Adat) and Qur'anic Laws, *Mindanao Journal*, III, 3-4 (January-June 1977), 162.

40. Ref. Saber, Tamano and Warriner, p. 80. Also cf. Mednick, p. 191; Riemer, p. 12.

41. "If he happens to be datu and government officer, he is, by his role in the former, traditionally obligated to protect the interest of his group [that is, his family and clan] at all costs." — Mamitua Saber, "Marginal Leadership in a Culture-Contact Situation," p. 69. "Protecting" the family interest, one knows, may well be tantamount to aggrandizing it, as opportunity permits. The author, however, does not examine how, on account of that family obligation, this datu could open himself to the temptations of "graft and corruption" in his government office.

Such absence of treatment is noticeable also in the author's doctoral dissertation, "The Transition from a Traditional to a Legal Authority System"; and in Charles K. Warriner, "Traditional Authority and the Modern State: the Case of the Maranao," and Melvin Mednick, "Sultans and Mayors: the Relation of a National

to an Indigenous Political System," both in the *The Maranao*, ed. Mamitua Saber and Abdullah T. Madale.

However, short as his article may be, Inocente N. Javier has devoted four paragraphs on family-oriented Maranao politics (p. 84).

42. David B. Baradas, "Maranao Law: A Study of Conflict and Its Resolution in a Multicentric Power System," Papers on the Codification of Muslim Customary (Adat) and Qur'anic Laws, *Mindanao Journal*, III, 3-4 (January-June 1977), 193.

43. Saber, Tamano and Warriner state: "A person of slave status is not expected [to exhibit] and would be punished for exhibiting *maratabat*." (p. 92)

44. Saber, Tamano and Warriner, p. 91.

45. Saber, Tamano and Warriner , p. 88.

In a paper, Batua Al. Macaraya emphasizes that maratabat ultimately defies "accurate" definition, adding that "it can only be understood by [means of observing] its manifestation." —"Maratabat as a Socio-Psychological Phenomenon in Maranao Society," n.d. (Unpublished)

46. Saber, Tamano and Warriner, p. 92.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.* Also it means being a "non-entity," a person without respectability, a *bisaya* (slave).

49. *Ibid.*

However, in his survey conducted in Lanao del Sur, Ismael R. Disoma *(passim)* believes that he has shown that the concept of maratabat among the Maranao is independent of their consciousness of social status. In this survey, Disoma felt that he had disengaged investigation from the usual subjective impressionism of preceding scholars by employing the interview instrument, that brought quantified results, on respondents who were themselves Maranaos. This statistical survey on the subject is unprecedented and may be an auspicious beginning of the use of the method on maratabat. It probably allows, nonetheless, at least one basic loophole for criticism. It assumes that the respondents (in the two *agamas* where the interviews were conducted), being native Maranaos who were familiar with the term and the conception of maratabat in their everyday lives, have naturally the best understanding of what maratabat means and what it is all about. The assumption does not consider the possibility that these respondents may not have had a long, investigative and objective observation of the subject and therefore may, ironically, not have a comprehensive *concept* of their own maratabat, although they may have had an everyday *conception* of it. (Their conception of maratabat, as Disoma succeeds in showing, appears to be less inclusive, possibly even peripheral and limited to the obvious, when compared with the concepts of maratabat by Saber, Tamano and Warriner, Baradas, Riemer, Mednick, Gowing, etc.) In other words, the respondents may have been persons who tended to "just live" their lives as normal ordinary people rather than persons trained to examine that life by the process of intellection. It is a truism in anthropology that a subject may not necessarily be his own best

scholar. In short, the impressions of the respondents about their own social behavior, although more massively recordable in statistical data, are variables that may be no more reliable than impressions held by armchair scholar-observers, who are otherwise notorious for their mistakes. Still the latter may be of value for their insights when these seem to strike home.

50. For example, in Saber, Tamano and Warriner's case illustration, the offended Batuampar tried to gain justice via the *taritib* or the *adat* (customary) law. However, Sarosong and his family ignored Batuampar's claims to redress and, being of higher social rank, could not be compelled by the *adat* to give the accuser satisfaction.

51. It is quite possible, however, to gain justice by peaceful means through the traditional method if all of the following factors exist: 1) "a go-between immediately interferes for conflict resolution," 2) the offender (or for that matter, the offended) agrees to the resolution, and 3) a *palokelokesan* (council of elders of a kinship group) is consulted to resolve the conflict. — Intuas M. Abdullah, "A Conceptual Model of Dispute Settlement Among Maranao: An Alternative Approach in the Study of Conflict Resolution," *Arts & Sciences Journal*, I, 2 (1981), 63.

52. Javier, p. 85. See also the ceremony of "honorable" settlement *(kapangangawid)*, Mamitua Saber, "The Transition from Traditional to a Legal Authority System: A Philippine Case," p. 132.

53. Says Riemer: among Maranaos, it is a "higher law" than the law of the Philippine Republic, at times, even "higher" than Qur'anic law (p. 34).

In this connection, it may be mentioned that Disoma flatly concludes that "the *maratabat* of [the] Maranao is a non-Islamic trait" (p. 86), but that being without maratabat roughly corresponds to behavior favored by the tenets of Islam. Disoma does not say that the maratabat practice can be un-Islamic.

54. Based on a notion of fairness and sheer individual courage, this manly practice does not seem to be popularly exhibited in and is apparently not indigenous to Philippine and other Indo-Malayan ethnic groups, even among those who consider themselves "brave" people. However, it seems fairly popular among their heroes in folk stories.

55. Riemer quotes Peter G. Gowing, James C. Stewart and Alunan Glang and cited Francisco Collin (1933) and Juan de la Matta (1843) to show how Filipino Muslims, including Maranaos, are, in Gowing's words, "no more violent and no less given to revenge than other Filipinos," pp. 44-45.

56. "The majority of Maranaws take pride in being regarded as persons of 'noble births' [which] they call *bangsa* or *bansa* [and] which the bearer of such status guards very zealously against being disrespected." — Mamitua Saber, "Marginal Leadership in a Culture-Contact Situation," p. 70.

57. Says Riemer: "*Maratabat* as a cultural value pervades all of Maranao life" (p. 2) and (quoting Melvin Mednick) "in 'the single, most emotionally charged concept in Maranao society'" (p. 4).

58. A good illustration of this point is the case of a datu, originally described by Alunan C. Glang, "Modernizing the Muslims," *Solidarity*, IV, 3 (March 1969), 4-5, and cited by Riemer, pp. 14-15.

59. "The wealth that Datu Moloc accrued and shared with his followers [through counterfeit coins] could be used to increase the *maratabat* of the kin group . . . . Hence, from the point of view of Datu Moloc and his companions counterfeiting would be ethically all right, and agents of the government who try to stop them would be hindering the progress of their kin group and thus offending their *maratabat*." — Riemer, pp. 14-15.

Moloc, incidentally, is described by Glang (as quoted by Riemer) as a datu who "counts with a very large following and is reportedly one of Lanao's top political leaders" *(Ibid.)*.

60. Says Abdullah: ". . . Islamic Law and Jurisprudence has not been well institutionalized in Maranao society. In fact, its use is insignificant in the resolution of conflicts involving personal offenses. This is paradoxical to [sic] the clamor of the Maranao for the implementation of *sharia* in their community." (p. 64)

61. Ref. Riemer, p. 34.

62. Macaraya, p. 8.

63. "Theoretically, a person [in Maranao society] should be able to trace his ancestry by consulting the *salsila* [genealogy] and one's incapacity to do so is indicative of his non-membership in the community and his being a *non-entity* in the view of the local population [underscording supplied]." David E. Baradas, "Some Implications of the Okir Motif in Lanao and Sulu Art," *The Muslim Filipinos A Book of Readings*, ed. Nagasura T. Madale, p. 183. Such a description of a person with this "incapacity" fits both the slave and the non-Maranao.

64. Writing about population movements, Baradas points out how Maranaos can "go into inland settlements and mix with any ethnic group without great apprehension," while other Philippine Muslims cannot do the same thing in Maranao country. Explains he: "the need for kin-oriented relationship among the Maranao may have discouraged any enterprising Tausug, Samal, or Badjao from coming back. The difficulty of settling in an area where one has no kin may have proved formidable to the friendly Sulu groups." ("Some Implications of the Okir Motif in Lanao and Sulu Art," *The Muslim Filipinos: A Book of Readings*, ed. N.T. Madale, p. 185.) Baradas probably felt no need to emphasize that the lack of kinsmen (and indeed *bangsa* and *maratabat*) in Maranao land is so difficult as to be "formidable" to non-Maranao Muslims, not simply because of loneliness in being a stranger in another people's territory, but because of the hazards of being a non-Maranao in Maranao country.

65. The relative freedom of Philippine islands slaves, as exemplified among the Magindanao, is discussed incidentally by Reynaldo C. Ileto, *Magindanao, 1860-1888*, pp. 36-37. A more extensive coverage is provided by James F. Warren, "Trade, Raid Slave: the Socio-Economic Patterns of the Sulu Zone, 1770-1898." Ph.D. Dis-

sertation, Australian National University, Canberra, 1975. (Unpublished)

66. Charles K. Warriner, "Myth and Reality in the Social Structure," *The Maranao*, ed. M. Saber and A.T. Madale, p. 42. Originally in *Philippine Sociological Review*, III (July-October, 1960).

67. If he were a useful slave, his master may yet view him as an existing property and may object to his being killed or in any way molested by other Maranaos. However, it is also possible that, working under a Maranao superior, even in public service, the non-Maranao non-slave may be regarded by his superior, even without the former's knowledge or consent, as a useful member of this *sakop* — that is, one among his retainers and henchmen serving his official and personal ends.

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