
FEMINIST CRITICISM based on the Short Story WEDDING DANCE by AMADOR DAGUIO

INTRODUCTION:

In a patriarchal culture, women are almost always relegated to secondary classes or roles. This is observable in western societies, both in Europe (considered the old world) and the Americas (the New World like the US and Canada). If that treatment is existent in such developed cultures where women have substantially advanced in the struggle for gender equality, one wonders about women's role and treatment in indigenous tribes stepped in regimented patriarchal traditions.

FEMINIST CRITICISM IN THE CULTURE OF INDIGENOUS TRIBES:

If inequality of genders is observable in western cultures, resulting in oppressive practices, it is even more glaring in indigenous patriarchal tribes in the Philippines. This assertion will be examined even closer specifically in the indigenous tribe of the Cordilleras and the Mountain Province through the work of Amador Daguió's short story **WEDDING DANCE**. Although the title is about the tribal tradition of dancing during the wedding celebration practices in a remote village in the Mountain Province, the **WEDDING DANCE** is actually a short love story of pain and separation between a husband (Awi Yao) and his wife (Lumnay). The gist or core of the story causing the conflict resulting in the pain of separation between the couple revolved around the unwritten rule in the tradition of their tribe that the husband has the right to replace his wife with another woman if after a period of cohabitation (seven harvesting periods as mentioned in the story) the wife could not produce an offspring. This could be discerned in the following paragraph at the later part of page 1: ***"No, You have been very good to me. You have been a good wife. I have nothing to say against You....It's only that a man must have a child. Seven harvests is just too long to wait. Yes we have waited too long...."*** In another paragraph in page 2: ***"Lumnay," he said tenderly. "Lumnay, if I did this, it is because of my need for a child. You know that life is not worth living without a child. The men have mocked me behind my back. You know that."*** In this highlighted paragraphs it is implicitly understood here that the burden of proof on fertility or infertility hang on the shoulders of the woman alone and not on the man. The stigma of being labeled as "barren" is always on women. Why is this the case? when biology as taught even in the public school system that infertility could be true in either the man or woman? It is possible that the procreative failure could be in the man but the woman could not prove it because if she allowed herself to be impregnated by another man thus proving her fertility, she would be labeled as a promiscuous woman and an adulterer. It is a glaringly unjust unwritten tradition in that tribe, that the woman who could not bear a child would just be discarded and left alone to go on with life without her husband. Anyone who reads this short love story of pain and separation would also be heart-broken for Lumnay. Would the woman reader putting her feet on the slippers of Lumnay dance

at such a wedding? How can she perform the WEDDING DANCE of celebration, when it is the dance of death of her crushed heart?

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