
Exploring Contemporary Literary Stories Depicting Gender Bias: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis

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ABSTRACT: Contemporary Filipino literature, while evolving, often reflects and reinforces gender norms. This study delves into how gender bias is linguistically constructed in these narratives, examining the potential impact of such representations on societal perceptions and behaviours. To investigate this, a Systemic Functional Linguistic approach, specifically Ideational Meta-Function, was employed to analyse seven selected Filipino literary stories. The analysis focused on linguistic choices, including vocabulary, personal noun usage and the depiction of physical attributes, emotions and behaviour. The findings revealed that the use of simple and label-like terms frequently reinforces traditional gender stereotypes, while more complex and nuanced language could either reproduce or challenge these stereotypes. Personal male nouns were often associated with masculine occupations while female nouns were linked to stereotypical roles. Moreover, the portrayal of physical attributes, emotions and behaviour often adhered to traditional gender norms, with males depicted as strong and powerful, and females as fragile and emotionally reactive. Such representations can limit individual expression and perpetuate gender inequality. This study underscores the power of language in shaping gender perceptions and behaviours. It highlights the need of critical analysis of literary texts to identify and challenge gender bias. By understanding how language constructs gender, we can work towards more equitable and inclusive representations in literature and society.

KEYWORDS: Gender bias, stereotypes, literary stories, prejudice, gender roles

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary fictional stories and literature act as a reflection and representation of current societal perceptions, assumptions, and attitudes surrounding gender biases and discrimination. Whether we enhance our lives via knowledge or imagination, reading is undeniably important in this process. As mentioned in literary works both reflect and impact society gender stereotypes (Dopp and Cain 147). Oakly who brought the notion of gender to the literature, claimed that sex relates to biological features, whereas gender in the phrase has psychological and cultural implications (qtd. in Aydemir et al. 232). Gender, according to this definition, is a condition acquired through certain social situations (Lindsey 987). Gender role education materials are delivered and reinforced via written and visual contents. In textbooks, in particular, can help students learn implicitly about gender norms (Adacay 9). Gender depiction analysis can give information into prevalent cultural attitudes and ideas (Polack 115).

Literature, a widely accessible and influential medium, has the power to challenge and support gender preconceptions. It can influence people's ideas of the world and their role in it, and can be found in various industries (Coyle and Llamas 55). However, it can also be a powerful weapon for challenging these prejudices and presenting nuanced views of gender. As stated, reader interpret literature through their own societal identity constructs, which are shaped by common assumptions about language, knowledge, and cultural models (qtd. Brendler 223). In view of this, one's language reveals their status and position in society, generating an exquisite illustration of their common perception (Monteza and Miralles 2). Recognizing how gender biases are linguistically created and exhibited in literature is crucial for understanding gender ideology and representations in discourse. Gender prejudices are often deeply embedded in the language used to portray people, explain events, and construct narrative viewpoints.

On the other hand, gender bias is a ubiquitous and frequently subtle phenomenon that has been the focus of much scholarly investigation. As explained, they have painstakingly examined the ways that both contemporary literary narratives reflect and reinforce the societal inequalities that people of diverse gender identities encounter (Charlesworth and Banaji 185). Gender bias is a complex phenomenon that is deeply ingrained in a variety of social, cultural, and institutional contexts. As indicated by Charlesworth and Banaji (189), this has been highlighted by the growing body of literature that has been written about this important issue in recent years.

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The proposed study aimed to explore the ways in which contemporary literary stories depict and perpetuate gender bias, utilizing a Systemic Functional Analysis approach to uncover the linguistic devices employed to convey and entrench these biases. The study delved into the diverse range of contemporary literary works spanning the years 1938-2012 that are written by Filipino authors, in order to gain comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of gender representation and the persistent challenges faced by individuals whose identities and experiences have historically been marginalized or overlooked within the literary canon.

Additionally, the study addressed a critical vacuum by offering an up-to-date knowledge of how gender stereotypes emerge and may be countered via linguistic choices in contemporary award-winning Philippine literary stories. While previous research has looked at gender representations in Philippine novels, graphic novels, and non-mainstream works, there has been little systematic linguistic analysis of gender bias in popular mainstream short story anthologies and collections, especially those written in both English and Filipino (Santos 89; Reyes 345; Kapoor et al., 215). The findings might be useful in advocating for gender equality. Identifying faulty ideological assumptions about gender, especially in seemingly progressive story narratives, highlights red flag issues that should be addressed through sociocultural awareness.

This would give us a better understanding of how gender prejudice and stereotypes are mirrored in current Philippine short fiction. Future research might build on this study by expanding the sample to include popular short story collections and works in Philippine languages, providing a more thorough picture of gender depictions in current Philippine literature. This would allow for a more detailed examination of how symptoms of gender prejudice are challenged or upheld.

More equitable depictions, on the other hand, challenge preconceptions and serve as excellent motivating resources. Content insights on systemic gender biases might help policymakers make decisions about diversity curricula, teaching materials, women's representation policies, media regulation, and other issues. The findings that show disparities give political motivation for corrective policy steps that promote gender sensitivity and equality (Chaudhuri 315).

Moreover, this study had been based on this framework for analysis. Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis Tool is a significant framework for evaluating literary texts in order to uncover underlying ideological underpinnings and social implications of language use in these narratives. Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics Analysis Tool Ideational Meta-function.

Language and linguistic analysis are critical in revealing the complex ways in which gender ideology pervade literary discourse. As explained, a linguistic approach based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) provides a powerful analytical framework for identifying subtle ways gender stereotypes are stored and repeated via lexico-grammatical patterns, characterization, and narrative structures (Lazar 190). This study attempts to highlight the intricate mechanisms via which gender prejudices arise and dominate literary discourse by undertaking an SFL analysis within an academic environment, as well as instances where stereotyped depictions are subverted by strategic language usage.

Conducting systemic functional linguistic analysis on contemporary stories that depict issues of gender bias can offer critical insights into the prevailing gender stereotypes, norms, double standards, and discriminatory assumptions that exist within modern society. Examining the characters, language, and narrative style can reveal the subtle ways in which gender biases and discrimination manifest and are reinforced within contemporary literature and media (Mills 240).

This study is focused on delving into exploring contemporary literary stories depicting gender bias: a systemic functional linguistic analysis. Particularly the objectives of this study, will focus on the following objectives: (1) Gender portrayal in Linguistic choices and (2) Traditional Prejudices.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Corpora

A corpus of seven award-winning contemporary Filipino short tales served as the primary data source for this study. These literary works were carefully chosen based on a number of factors, including their extraordinary literary excellence, thematic significance to the study of gender, and ability to elucidate subtle and diverse depictions of gender roles and identities. By concentrating on acclaimed and critically praised short tales, we hoped to study the nuanced ways in which gender prejudice is formed, maintained, and perhaps addressed within a specific cultural and linguistic context - modern Filipino literature.

This corpus was carefully vetted to provide a wide range of views, styles, and topic approaches. The inclusion of award-winning pieces ensures a high level of literary quality, indicating acknowledgment from renowned literary characters and institutions in the Filipino literary landscape. Furthermore, the choice of such famous works assures that the analysis is founded on texts that have had a substantial cultural influence, striking a chord with readers and contributing to the ongoing conversation on Filipino literature.

The condensed and focused nature of the short story format proves particularly advantageous for this study. It allows for a detailed and in-depth analysis of linguistic features, narrative techniques, and stylistic choices, enabling a nuanced understanding of how gendered discourses are subtly woven into the fabric of the text. The following tables provides an overview of the seven short stories included in the corpus:

The Mats

Author: Francisco Arcellana (1938) - The status of women in 1938 can be considered as quite low and gender roles were highly fixed in most societies. Queer identities were still stigmatized, marginalized, and quite frequently was legal discriminated as well as social discriminated within mental health domain where queer sexual orientation was seen as a sickness or a disorder. The women's lib had achieved some milestones; however, women did not have several fundamental legal, economic and political rights.

Synopsis: The mats are personalized with each family member's name and birthstone. The father also brings mats for three deceased children, which causes tension in the family. The gender bias in the story is that the father only gives mats to his children, and not to his wife. This is likely since the story is set in a patriarchal society where men are seen as the head of the household.

The Virgin

Author: Kerima Polotan Tuvera (1952) – 1952 was a period that greatly suppressed the females and any other individuals having different sexual orientation. As a result of the post-WWII reconstruction, women's domesticity remained dominant in most western societies: however, the early hints of feminism commence with great vigorous opposition.

Synopsis: This story deals with societal expectations and perceptions of virtue tied to a woman's purity and its consequences.

The Wedding Dance

Author: Amador T. Daguio (1953) – The year 1953 was quite traditional and Patriarchal with the women's roles restricted to being wives, daughters, and mothers on the society. Homosexuality was criminalized and people with such sexual orientation or gender identity were discriminated and persecuted. Despite this, many countries have granted women voting rights through the movements of the women suffrage, although the major inequalities always prevailed.

Synopsis: A short story about a husband and wife, Awiyao and Lumnay, who had been married for seven years. In spite of being in love with his wife, Awiyao feels the need to marry again to have a son.

Magnificence

Author: Estrella Alfon (1960) - 1960, women supposed to be housewives and to take care of their children. But there was a surge in the feminism movement – a movement of improvement of women's position in society and their rights. Basically, a new level of 'tolerance' toward homosexuals was emerging albeit prejudice and prejudice against HIV / AIDS positive people persisted.

Synopsis: This story explores societal norms and gender expectations within a family setting, showcasing the struggles and conflicts arising from these traditional roles.

Love in the Cornhusks

Author: Aida L. Rivera (1994) – By 1954, the societies of all the countries of the world were still tending to gender stereotypes and nuclear family norms. Yes, there has been some improvements through the movement of women, however women still have a long way of going through a lot of challenges, legal, social and economic barriers as well as inequalities. **Synopsis:** Love in the Cornhusks is a story about a young woman named Elizabelle who is living in rural Guatemala. Elizabelle is a hardworking woman who is trying to make ends meet for her and her son. She works on a farm that grows corn and makes tortilla. Despite the hard work, she is unable to make enough money to support the adequately.

Epiphany

Author: M. Protacio de Guzman (1996) – Looking back to 1996, that is when people with non-heterosexual orientations and other aspects of gender non-conformity slowly began to emerge as equal citizens in many countries across the world as the gay rights movement was steadily progressing. Some of the aspects that were being increasingly commonly debated included gender roles and gender identities and non-binary gender.

Synopsis: A woman awakens to the realization that her feelings for her partner have shifted. As she contemplates their relationship throughout the day she grapples with the changes in her emotions. Towards evening when her partner returns unwell, she tends to him. Rediscovered her enduring love, for him transcending their disagreements.

Fish Hair Woman

Author: Merlinda Bobis (2012) – In 2012, the rights concerning the LGBTQ+ populations in many countries have been recognized to a certain extent and discrimination and inequality were still present. Issues concerning transgenders struggles for their rights, gender identity and gender expression issues are always in the limelight in such aspects as the health facilities, in sports, and in legislation. Labor rights and specifically feminist and women rights movements pursued their fight to tackle the remaining gender disparities in such domains as remuneration, promotion to leadership or positions in governmental institutions

Synopsis: The novel portrays the story of a young girl who struggles to survive amidst violence and gender inequality in a small village in the Philippines.

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2.2 Research Design

This study employed qualitative analysis approach to examine the portrayal of gender roles and relationships in a collection of contemporary literary stories. Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that seeks to get a thorough knowledge of human behavior and the factors that influence it (Denzin and Lincoln 132). In accordance with this, qualitative data sources documents and texts, and the researcher's opinions and responses (Myers 200). The analysis focused on identifying patterns and themes related to gender bias, such as the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

A selection of stories from various genres and cultural contexts will be analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how gender bias is represented in contemporary literature. The analysis considered the linguistic choices, language use, and power dynamics within the stories to uncover the ways in which gender bias is embedded in the literary text. The findings of this study contributed to a broader understanding of the role of literature in shaping gender norms and expectations.

Framework of Analysis



Figure 1: Framework of Analysis from Michael Halliday's SFL

In the context of this study, we the researchers employed content analysis to delve deeper from the literary texts into the understanding of gender biases. Content analysis is a versatile research technique that may be used to measure content in many types of communication and texts (media, books, articles, social media, etc.) using specified categories and code. Qualitative content analysis is a research approach for methodically describing and interpreting the meaning of qualitative data, such as texts, photographs,

audio, or video (Schreier 20).

As indicated in the study, it goes beyond just counting words or extracting objective information to investigate the meanings, themes, and patterns that may express or be latent in a given text (Zhang and Wildemuth 312). Moreover, the researcher will utilize the toolkit extracted from Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis Tool, specifically the Ideational Meta-function. By examining the Ideational meta-function of SFL we can uncover how language constructs and reinforces gender bias within the stories (Halliday & Matthiessen 500).

Ideational Meta-function dives into the portrayal of gender roles and identities. As mentioned by Martin and Rose (75), it investigates the language used to represent male and female characters, the development of their identities through linguistic choices, and how the book reflects current social and cultural standards about gender. As explained, this function determines whether the text reinforces or challenges traditional prejudices (Mills 300)

For Traditional Prejudices, using Circumstance analysis (the key components of the transitivity system), we analyze the language aspects that convey our worldly and personal experiences. These materials help us organize, portray, and interpret our impressions of the world. And for Gender Portrayal in Linguistic Choices, using grammatical, lexical and referential analysis, analyzed how language portrays gender. Linguistic gender representation that allows gender-related messages to be produced and delivered (Hellinger and Bubmann 15).

Halliday's Ideational Meta-function toolbox uniquely provides a rigorous and strong grammar for studying real texts in order to unearth underlying ideological implications. Analyzing a text using the ideational meta-function reveals how characters are portrayed based on their gender and the activities they engage in. According to the study, "A critical analysis of the ideational

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meta-function in texts can reveal assumptions about what are appropriate male and female roles and characteristics" (Mills and Mullany 29). For example, the verbs, adjectives, and situations associated with male and female characters reveal underlying gender ideas. Researchers can delve not just into surface forms, but also into underlying semantic systems.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Gender Portrayal in Linguistic Choices: Lexical Gender

Simple and Descriptive. Words used, include he, his, him, señor, senora, master and maid. These phrases show how gender is ingrained in ordinary language, frequently supporting traditional gender roles and prejudices. The masculine pronouns have been a source contention in recent years, particularly in the context of gender-neutral language use. As point out, these pronouns have traditionally employed as general forms, possibly excluding or decreasing representation of other genders. these are straightforward pronouns that clearly refer to the male character (Lindqvist 81).

Simple Words

“he”, “his”, “Senor”, “master”, “maid”

The simplicity of the language helps to keep the story clear and understandable. People maintain a consistent sense of self by developing a narrative identity that weaves together their past experiences and a vision of their future (Botos and Bousalis 25). This choice of words also adds to the overall straightforward and uncomplicated style of the story. These pronouns are employed consistently when referring to Vicente, the man who visits the children and helps them with their homework. For instance, phrases like “he would stand for a while,” “his feet in the circle of illumination,” and “his manner slow”¹ demonstrate the use of basic pronouns to establish Vicente’s gender.

The Spanish honorifics plainly indicate gender. Moreover, "Master" and "maid" are occupational names with significant gender implications, reflecting historical power relations and gendered divisions of labour (Wasserman and Weseley 641). As highlighted, in their study of gendered language in job adverts, these phrases can reinforce gender preconceptions in professional settings (Hodel et al., 390)

The usage of gendered terminology can have a considerable impact on societal attitudes and equality. For example, it is discovered that gender-inclusive language can lessen mental representations of men in gendered professional occupations (Sczesny et al., 110). Similarly, it was found that using gender neutral language in job descriptions enhanced women's interest in traditionally male dominated areas (Wasserman and Wesely 638).

Descriptive Words

“thin cheeks”, “receding chin”, “muscular boy”, “bronzed and sturdy face”, “fleshy legs”, “plump figure”, “foul undergarment”, “toned body”, “black with red lights”

Furthermore, using descriptive words are used to contribute to the readers understanding of the character, descriptive words that portray, especially, physical attributes with gendered implications. As point out in their analysis about body image portrayal on social media: “Muscles bulging from his jeans and ‘toned body’ are typical masculine ideals of strength and fitness” (Döring 5).

Trekels et al. (1442) draw attention to what they term a 'muscular boy' in direct link with traditional gender roles, a theme explored by the present work on adolescent body image. Additionally, it states that the words, "bronzed and sturdy face", elements of attractiveness and resistance, among which earlier association of male appearances with certain mediatic images of masculinity is examined are combined.

Descriptive language, for example, perpetuates gender roles by emphasizing characteristics that conform to cultural norms. Descriptive phrases like "muscular boy" and "bronzed and sturdy face" also highlight Awiyao's muscularity and role in society. In terms of showcasing his power, this description reflects the story's portrayal of the idealized masculinity in society. Based on the study, since Awiyao's duties and physical attributes are portrayed in language that shapes and perpetuates his gender identity, the idea of gender performativity is equally pertinent (Butler 15). These descriptors illustrate how labelled physical attributes in language can constructively or unconsciously signal gender and type of being, and also the type of image agreeable to society.

Additionally, vivid and evocative, and many of these descriptive words — 'plump figure,' 'foul undergarment,' 'thin cheeks,' 'receding chin,' 'black with red lights' — carry their own connotations and potentially their own implications. As reiterated, sometimes it's the plump figure that we mean, with more often than not gendered or even societal implications, such terms can be used in conveying evolving beauty standards as well as body positivity movements' (Cwynar 40). As explained, it sounds jarring

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and disgusting, and just the word "foul undergarment" could cursorily suggest neglect or poor hygiene, which can sway social perceptions, judgments (Paharia & Deshpande 85).

Furthermore, facial descriptors like 'thin cheeks', 'receding chin' are considered age, health, or genetic traits. As stated, it investigates how facial features like these shape people's judgements of attractiveness and social status (Kościński 338). As point out the more abstract word phrase, 'black with red lights' could describe a scene, an object of existence, or set a mood, colour description in language could inspire particular emotional feelings, or create a desired mood in a text's narrative context (Wang et al., 13).

Table 1: Gender Portrayal in Linguistic Choices: Lexical Gender

Lexical Gender	Corpora						
	The Mats (Francisco Arcellana) - 1938	The Virgin (Kerima Polotan Tuvera) - 1952	The Wedding Dance (Amador T. Daguio) - 1953	Magnificence (Estrella Alfon) - 1960	Love in the Cornhusks (Aida L. Rivera) - 1994	Epiphany (M. Protacio de Guzman) - 1996	Fish-Hair Woman (Merlinda Bobis) - 2012
Simple				"he" "his" "him"	"Senor" "Senora" "Master" "maid"		
Descriptive		"thin cheeks" "receding chin"	"muscular boy" "bronzed and sturdy face"		"fleshy legs" "Plump figure" "foul undergarment"	"toned body" "muscles bulging in his jeans," ⁶	"his lips shimmered with the tinsel creatures of the night" "Fish with your hair, woman"
Complex	"strangely young shyness" ¹					"Revulsion" "dislike" "love" "endearment" "Young master" "former mistress"	'Cur' 'beast,' 'pale sissy' 'perfect curve if brow'
Evaluative		"Secret, short-lived thoughts flitted through her mind in the jeepneys she took to work," "she looked away, sick all at once,"	"his muscles were taut and firm" "her eyes seemed to smile in the light"	"There was nothing to fear, for the man was always so gentle, so kind."		"Loud snores rudely stabbed the silence" "kind" "generous"	"villagers" "soldiers"
Specific		"Driver" "Miss Mijares"	"Good wife" "strong in planting beans" "strong, muscular boy"	"The man" "mother"	"dearest"	"Gym instructor" "flirt" "mindless chatter" "lack of intellectual depth"	"black with red lights."
General	"children" "The family"	"evening"	"Villagers" "dancers"	"man," "little girl," "little boy"	"tractor driver"	"lover" "partner"	

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The focus on hair as a distinguishing characteristic is consistent with literary themes of culture and personal identity (Bobis (2012). They show the extent to which the language lends itself to imagery of detail, to the making of subtle judgments, and to the reinforcement or challenge of culturally shaped conceptions of appearance, cleanliness and the beautiful.

By intertwining these linguistic strategies, the author effectively conveys the complexities of gender dynamics and individual characterization within the story, making the characters' interactions more relatable and the narrative more immersive. It is evident how the author both adheres to and defies conventional gender roles. While observations on gendered communication show nuances in how men and women are portrayed in words and story structure, on the other hand the concept of gender performative behavior can be seen in how the author's characters perform their identities through language description (Tannen's 80, Butler 9).

Complex or Evaluative. Authors frequently use sophisticated words or phrases to enrich their language, express nuanced meanings, and establish a certain tone or mood in their works. "Loud snores rudely stabbed the silence"⁶, this phrase goes beyond a simple description of snoring; it evaluates the snoring as being "loud" and "rude", reflecting the narrator's negative perception. "Revulsion," "dislike," "love," "endearment" these are complex emotional reactions that the narrator experiences towards the male character, reflecting the complexity of their relationship dynamic. Also, the words/phrase "Young master," "former mistress," are made up of multiple morphemes that come together to create a new meaning. Like the word "young master" combines "young" and "master" to create a specific title. "Former mistress" combines "former" and "mistress" to show a past relationship.

Complex Words

"Revulsion", "dislike", "love", "endearment", "Young master",
"former mistress", "Cur", "beast", "pale sissy" "perfect curve if brow"

Evaluative Words

"she looked away, sick all at once," "his muscles were taut and firm",
"her eyes seemed to smile in the light", "There was nothing to fear, for
the man was always so gentle, so kind.", Loud snores rudely stabbed
the silence", "kind", "generous", "soldiers", "villagers"

Additionally, the author delves into gender dynamics by making subtle linguistic choices. Sentences like "his lips shimmered with the tinsel creatures of the night" express the protagonist's feelings by evoking a sense of both curiosity and unease in addition to describing the physical action. "Fish with your hair, woman" symbolizing the protagonist's identity and her place in the village. Tony's masculinity is assessed from a cultural standpoint using the term "sissy Australian," which draws attention to prejudices and social expectations.

The author challenges readers to think about gender roles, power dynamics, and the emotional complexity of the characters in an oppressive and at war environment by using evaluative language throughout the narrative. According to feminist stylistics, shows studies how linguistic decisions both uphold and defy gender norms. To be able to fit into Mills' framework, the author analyzes traditional stereotypes about gender and presents a representation of her characters using evaluative language.

The study of gendered discourses, offers more background information for comprehending how the author's story interacts with and defies gender-related narratives in culture (Sunderland 15). "Kind," "generous", these words paint a picture with details. The words express an opinion or judgement. Additionally, the line "his muscles were taut and firm" emphasizes the strength and resilience that are stereotypical of men. Expressions like "her eyes seemed to smile in the light" emphasize Lumnay's emotional range and highlight the resilience and sensitivity of women.

The line, "You should join the dancers³ also represents cultural expectations for women to adjust and take on new responsibilities following a separation, in addition to being a recommendation. "Secret, short-lived thoughts flitted through her mind in the jeepneys she took to work," reveals Miss Mirajes' fleeting and private thoughts about love and intimacy, highlighting her inner desires and unfulfilled longings. This brief introspection contrasts sharply with her reaction when "she looked away, sick all at once," upon learning about a man's son. This reaction depicts her sudden revulsion and disappointment, reflecting her emotional sensitivity and high moral standards, and emphasizing the gap between her romantic fantasies and the harsh realities that she encounters.

While it aids in finding partners, it also poses challenges for meaningful relationships. Navigating this complexity requires a blend of intuition and deliberate thought, yet our modern society has fostered a vibrant romantic environment. The author provides readers to explore the specifics of gender roles, power relationships, and emotional experiences inside the story's cultural and societal framework by using this evaluative language.

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The sentence, "Nana Emilia stepped forward to the light, wiping her still moist hands against the folds of her skirt, and with a strangely young shyness received the mat.". This phrase portrays Nana Emilia in a manner that emphasizes traditional femininity and modesty. The "strangely young shyness" suggests an almost childlike demeanor, potentially reinforcing the stereotype of women as passive or demure. The act of "wiping her still moist hands against the folds of her skirt" subtly aligns her with domestic chores, further entrenching the gender role of women being associated with household duties.

"There was nothing to fear, for the man was always so gentle, so kind." This phrase not only describes Vicente's behavior but also positively evaluates his character. The emphasis on his "gentleness" and "kindness" sets up a contrast to the later unsettling actions, deepening the narrative tension. "Queer young man" The term 'queer' is used evaluatively to suggest Vicente is different or odd, which can carry a negative connotation. A descriptive analysis should include terms that distinguish between products, describe their sensory properties, and provide enough detail for their recognition or identification.

Specific. In the stories, authors use certain words and phrases to elicit emotions, generate pictures, set tone, and express exact meanings in a specific way. The phrase "Gym instructor", is a specific profession associated with traditional masculine role and interest. "Flirt," "mindless chatter," "lack of intellectual depth" these are specific criticisms and evaluations of the male character's behavior and personality traits, which conform to certain gender stereotypes. "Dearest Tinay" is specific because "dearest" is an intensifier that narrows down the feeling towards a particular person. "Tinay" itself is a proper noun, a specific name.

Specific Words

"Driver", "Miss Mijares", "Good wife", "strong in planting beans",
"strong, muscular boy", "The man", "mother", "dearest", "Gym
instructor", "flirt", "mindless chatter", "lack of intellectual depth",
"black with red lights."

'Cur', and 'beast,' used by the characters by reflecting specific gendered insults within the story. Additionally, the protagonist relationship with Tony is depicted through specific evaluations and descriptions, like 'pale sissy' and 'perfect curve if brow', which reveal cultural biases and individual characteristics. Gender studies of language generally look at how particular vocabulary choices reflect broader societal views and biases (Cameron 25). By demonstrating how language may reinforce gendered biases, the writers' usage of terminology like "cur" and "beast" aligns with Cameron's observations.

Discussing the performative aspect of gender, makes the argument that language choices are critical to the formation of identity (Butler 18). Language plays a role in the presentation of gender identity, as seen by the author's depiction of Tony as a "pale sissy" and the protagonist as having a "perfect curve of brow.", "Strong in planting beans" and "good wife" are examples of the roles that society has allocated to women, highlighting their usefulness and domestic responsibilities. According to the study, this is consistent with the way that language upholds conventional gender stereotypes by with the functions that women play in taking care of the home and family (Gilligans 135). Like the phrases "strong, muscular boy" that show traits associated with men only serve to perpetuate gender stereotypes about strength and muscularity.

According to the study, it analyzes the ways in which these phrases reinforce cultural expectations about masculine power and dominance and gender stereotypes connected to masculinity (Connell 25). Similarly, terms that emphasize stereotypically masculine qualities like "strong, muscular boy" serve to reinforce gender stereotypes associated with muscularity and strength. These deliberate language choices highlight the formed stereotypes and unique traits that mold and test the characters in their environment of society. The term "driver" refers broadly to individuals who operate vehicles, encompassing a wide range of people involved in the task of driving without distinguishing any particular driver from another.

On the other hand, the phrase "Miss Mijares waited on that Tuesday" introduces a specific character named Miss Mijares and pinpoints a particular day of the week, Tuesday, thereby providing a clear and detailed context within the narrative. Unlike the general term "Driver," which lacks specificity, the use of "Miss Mijares" and "Tuesday" offers precise information that grounds the narrative in a concrete moment in time and highlights the importance of the character's actions and timing. As expected, women with strong gender identification were more likely to attribute ambiguous prejudice to discrimination compared to those with weaker identification, but this was not the case with clear or no prejudice (Schmader 440).

Women exposed to overt prejudice had higher self-esteem than those facing ambiguous or no prejudice. According to the study, "The an" is described in terms that emphasize traditional masculine qualities such as gentleness and kindness (Penhale 18). Its diverse meanings require more careful investigation, as some interpretations conflict with both social constructionist views and critical takes on tradition. This specific portrayal contrasts with the more typical association of strength and authority with masculinity, highlighting a nuanced depiction of a male character. According to the study, the word "mother" is depicted as the figure of authority and protector, which is often a traditionally masculine role (Deschênes 350). While it's clear that both maternal

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and paternal parenting quality is vital for child development, there's limited knowledge about how similar these parenting behaviors are within families and what factors might influence these similarities.

General. The words “lover,” and “partner” are general terms used to describe their romantic relationship, without specifying gender roles or expectations. The term “Tractor driver” describes a profession but doesn’t specify a particular person. The terms like “soldiers” and “village” are used generally to represent groups of people without specific gender. The ways in which language can both reflect and shape social groups and identities (Eckert and McConnel 33). The findings about language and community identify as the author emphasizes the collective identity and experiences of the characters, she writes by employing general terms like “village” and “soldiers.”

General Words

“children”, “The family”, “evening”, “Villagers”, “dancers”, “man”,
“little girl”, “little boy”, “tractor driver”, “lover”, “partner”

The author uses general terms like “villagers” and “dancers” without specifying gender. By concentrating on specific gender identities, these general words emphasize the community's common experiences and traditions. Because of this widespread use of language, the story can emphasize the common traditions and social norms that affect every tribe member, regardless of gender. These broad terms reflect the common experiences and traditions of the community by focusing on gender identities. General language has the power to both reflect and uphold social structures and norms, shown these terms emphasize the tribe's collective experiences rather than concentrating on individual gender identities (Lemke 47).

The story may emphasize common traditions and social standards that impact every tribe member, regardless of gender, because of the extensive use of language. “That evening, she was lost only for a while.”, the word “evening” and the phrase “lost only for a while” are general and set a broad timeframe and situation without specifics. The impact of gender systems in languages on people's perceptions was investigated through a cross-cultural study (Flaherty and Shanahan 395). By comparing various cultural contexts, the study aimed to uncover potential differences in cognition and perception that arise from the linguistic structures specific to each language. This vagueness leaves room for interpretation and allows the reader to imagine the circumstances surrounding her moment of being lost. The term “children” is gender-neutral, encompassing both male and female members of the family. However, within the narrative, the experiences and attributes of individual children are often specified along gender lines. “The family”, this is a general term, yet the responsibilities and roles within the family, as described in the story, highlight traditional gender expectations.

“Man”, “little girl”, and “little boy” typically denote age and gender without enforcing specific roles or expectations. Referring to someone as a “man” identifies them as an adult male but doesn’t imply any behavior or career choice.

Likewise, “little girl” and “little boy” specify a child's age and gender without dictating characteristics or societal roles. This neutral terminology helps people be acknowledged for their individual traits and interests rather than being constrained by stereotypes (Ashmore 228).

Separating the vocabulary with regard to the simple/descriptive, complex/evaluative, specific, and general, conducting such analysis, the researchers were able to find that the use of basic and label-like terms tends to bring reinforcement of the stereotype gender roles; while that of complex and cumulative terms may either reproduce or transgress these roles. By the means of intersectionality, linguistic inequality, and gender performance theories, the scholarly work proves that the authors’ language attitudes are representative of and may contribute to altering gender perceptions.

Furthermore, an examination of the literature samples that included works from 1938 to 2012 show a progressive change of the gender bias in different periods. Works published before 1930 to mid-1950 show that female characters are most often depicted as women with domestic responsibilities and are portrayed as modest while male characters are described physically ‘strong’ or exercising authority. There are more advanced portrayals of women in mid-century pieces of the 1950s and 1960s, but female subordinate to male characters remains as a dominant narrative.

The improved portrayal of gender comes the later part of the twentieth century, particularly more of the works that are produced in the 1990s, and the concept of intersectionality has been present wherein the analysis of the language used is more evaluative for both male and female character. The work from the 21st century, shows a more progressive way of portraying gender, characters are depicted as complex as well as the relationships they portray. It is to be pointed out that gender bias and stereotyping are less manifest in subsequent periods but are not entirely absent across time.

Gender Portrayal in Linguistic Choices: Grammatical Gender

Personal Male Nouns. The noun “gym instructor” refers explicitly to the male character’s profession, which typically associated with masculinity. It falls under the category because it is a gendered noun that specifically refers to the male character’s occupation. Professions involving physical fitness and strength are often associated with masculine traits and roles in society.

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Additionally, the noun “lover” (when referring to the male character), is used as a term of endearment for the male character, taking on masculine grammatical gender.

Personal Male Nouns

“son”, “driver”, “husband”, “warrior”, “elders”, “man”, “conductor”,
“gym instructor”, “sergeant”, “soldiers”

Additionally, the word “lover” itself is not inherently gendered, its grammatical gender here aligns with the male subject it refers to. The noun “Tito”, fall under the category of personal male nouns because it is a proper noun that refers to a specific male character in. Also, the noun “Amado”, also falls in the same category, referring to the tractor driver who was Tinang’s former love interest.

The term "sergeant" corresponds to the masculine grammatical gender and expressly indicates the male character's position and function in the military. This phrase belongs in this category since it particularly alludes to the authoritative role held by male characters. In a similar way, labels such as "boys" and "soldiers" are applied to collectives of men, highlighting the prominence of men in the story. As stated in the study, it analyzes the social roles played by gendered language, highlighting the ways in which certain phrases can either support or contradict societal norms (Holmes 16). The author critiques gender stereotypes and depicts them through certain language choices. The word "husband" defines the gender that is masculine, emphasizing Awiyao's position in his marriage. This phrase shows his role and obligations as a male partner within the story's cultural setting.

Moreover, personal male nouns also play a role in the construction and reinforcement of gender roles by showing attributes and responsibilities that are associated with men (Ginet 73). "Warrior" and "elders" define only male individuals, showing their respected and influential positions within the tribe. The term "elders" refers to social authority and knowledge, further enhancing the highly esteemed position of male figures in the community. The noun "warrior" suggests strength and bravery, qualities traditionally associated with masculinity and leadership.

Although the term "driver" is gender-neutral, the text specifies this character as male through the context and use of pronouns. The driver stops the vehicle and addresses the passengers, indicating his authoritative role. The term "son" emphasizes the gender of the eldest child, highlighting male responsibility in reading the letter aloud in the story. It falls under the category because it is a gendered noun. The noun "man" is used repeatedly to refer to Vicente, the adult male character. This establishes his gender explicitly and aligns with traditional gender roles, depicting him as an authoritative figure in the children's lives. Additionally, "Bus Conductor". This noun explicitly refers to Vicente's profession. While not inherently gendered, the context implies traditional male-dominated roles in public transportation.

Personal Female Nouns. The noun “secretary”⁶ is categorized as a personal female noun because it traditionally refers to a profession or role that has been historically associated with women in office or administrative settings. Although gender roles have evolved, the noun “secretary” still carries some implications of a feminine occupation. Moreover, the noun “actor” (referring to Meryl Streep), is considered a personal female noun in this instance as it is used to refer to Meryl Streep, a famous actress. Although the word “actor” can technically be use for both genders, in this context, it is clearly referring to a female individual in the acting profession. While “Senora”, while not a proper noun, this term is used to address or refer to a married woman, making it a personal female noun.

Personal Female Nouns

"grandmother", "daughter", "woman", "wife", "dancer", "little girl",
"Senora", "secretary", "actor", "mother"

Furthermore, “Wife”, this noun describes Tinang’s and Lumnay’s marital status as the spouse of their husbands and the role in their marriage and is grammatically feminine making it a personal female noun. The word "wife" defines Lumnay's role in her marriage and is grammatically feminine. It emphasizes her role and obligations as a female partner in the story's. Words like "dancer" and "woman" describe female characters, their roles in society, and their contributions. As stated in the study, the term "woman" designates gender and identity, while the term "dancer" designates involvement in cultural rituals, both of which serve to further strengthen the socially prescribed roles that women play (Spender 145).

Table 2: Gender Portrayal in Linguistic Choices: Grammatical Gender

Grammatical Gender	Corpora						
	The Mats (Francisco Arecellana) - 1938	The Virgin (Kerima Polotan Tuvera) - 1952	The Wedding Dance (Amador T. Daguio) - 1953	Magnificence (Estrella Alfon) - 1960	Love in the Cornhusks (Aida L. Rivera) - 1994	Epiphany (M. Protacio de Guzman) - 1996	Fish-Hair Woman (Merlinda Bobis) - 2012
Personal Male Nouns	“son”	“driver”	“husband” “warrior” “elders”	“man” “conductor”		“gym instructor” “lover”	“sergeant” “boys” “soldiers”
Personal Female Nouns	“grandmother” “daughter”	“woman”	“wife” “dancer” “woman”	“little girl”	“Senora” “wife”	“secretary” “actor”	“mother”

Discusses the impact of politeness standards and gendered language on social interactions, the story's use of personal feminine nouns illustrates the social norms that control women's conduct in the story's cultural context (Holmes 165). The term "woman" defines the story's protagonist in a direct feminine manner and directly indicating her gender and highlighting her as the female character. It alludes to gender and personal identity during the story.

Additionally, term such as "ma'am" is used by the male character to address Miss Mijares, showing respect and indicating her gender. Pronouns like "her" and "she" are consistently used to refer to Miss Mijares, emphasizing her female identity throughout the story. The story underscores the roles of women within the family structure, often associated with caregiving, nurturing, and maintaining family traditions and memories. Examining how self-representation is portrayed can reveal the contrast between individual female roles and collective identity, reflecting traditional expectations and the specific cultural and social contexts in which migrants live (Afsar 1389). Terms such as "mother," "grandmother," and "daughter" are also personal nouns used by women to refer to female family relationships in the story.

These terms emphasize familial relationships and roles based on gender. "Mamay dulce" is a personal female word that designates another female character, emphasizing her unique identity and position as a mother. "Little girl" is expected to act demurely and politely, reflecting traditional feminine norms. Her discomfort when Vicente holds her on his lap and his eventual inappropriate behavior highlight a gendered expectation of girls being passive and submissive. The noun "mother" denotes a female parent. It's used to refer to the children's mother who is a key figure in the story.

The analysis shows that personal male nouns are likely to name occupations reflecting masculinity (e. g. 'gym instructor', 'sergeant'), dominant roles ('husband', 'warrior') or particular male subjectivity ('Tito', 'Amado'). Unlike the personal male nouns, the personal female nouns often represent a stereotyped working woman ("secretary", "wife") or family roles and relations ("mother", "daughter"), or a particular woman, "Senora". It shows how such decisions in language reproduce gendered discourses of power relations in the given cultures within the body of the stories.

Additionally, all the analyzed works were created, in various genres, between 1938 and 2012, thus reflecting the Filipino literature of several decades. Here too, gender biased language and gendered division of tasks are evident what seems to have been the case most of the time. Male characters work in authority or physical power or are in some way public figures, while female characters are more often home-oriented or stereotypically feminine. This cannot be separated from the notion of gender stereotypes and the division of labor that is clearly seen in all shown in all the works under consideration is the division of roles that adapts to the given epoch but gender stereotype remains the same.

Gender Portrayal in Linguistic Choices: Referential Gender

Physical Descriptors. The phrase illustrates in a clear way gender bias referring to the body of women make them seem powerless and objects weakly defended as helpless idols. According to the argument on gender stereotypes, the description of a woman as exhausted and unsettled suggests that she is emotionally unstable (Ellemers' 283). From the discoursed light, the emphasis which is made on her clothes, ruffles on her skirt crumpled and the hemline of her skirt awry, highlights the feminine attire and accentuates the clothes' irremediable disarray which could act in compliance with the gender stereotype, who forges a discourse about the dress and gender performativity (Lamont 9).

"But that evening, she was lost only for a while. The driver stopped at a corner that looked like a little-known part of the boulevard she passed each day and she alighted and stood on a street island, the passing headlights playing on her, a tired, shaken woman, the ruffles on her skirt crumpled, the hemline of her skirt awry.

- The Virgin

Moreover, the description of "passing headlights playing on her" when she is photographed walking alone in the street island gives a picture of a woman standing alone in public space, which is asserted as depicted in most of Urban space and gendered safety (Sandberg and Ronnblom (2020). Altogether, they form a part of a discourse that then tends to remind the audiences of social norms and female behaviors as well as performances in the public sphere.

"hard and strong"

"sturdy and bronzed face"

- The Wedding Dance

The description of Awiyao as "hard and strong" emphasizes both his masculinity and his ability to provide for others. Understanding how physical descriptions emphasize conventional masculine qualities might be aided by an understanding of the language of masculinity (Kiesling 667). This portrayal coincides with the theory of hegemonic masculinity, which emphasizes conventional masculine characteristics like toughness and strength (Connell's 28). Daguo's portrayal of Lummay with a "sturdy and bronzed face" demonstrates her perseverance and dedication to her spouse, qualities that are frequently connected to conventional femininity and courage.

"Vicente slapped the boy smartly on his lean hips, and said, Boys do not kiss boys."

- Magnificence

Through the phrase, adds to what are more negative and usual stereotypes and viewpoints of masculinity. These descriptions of the boy's "lean hips", sexualizes and objectifies the child's body, which parallels what Coffey (23), says is a problematic way of scrutinizing the gendered body. Focusing on the physical traits enacted a societal set of ideals regarding male body and it may contribute to such problems as body image in young males. As noted in the study, these are harmful masculine socialization practices, taking physical discipline and putting it on his lean hips all while referring to a body part often associated with sexuality (Reigeluth and Addis 306).

Furthermore, this physical act is linked by the suggestion, "Boys do not kiss boys," to penalizing of gender nonconforming behaviors in children, the use of physical descriptors in this way works to objectify the boys' body as well as to bolster a relatively narrow and restrictive definition of what is considered appropriately physically and behaviorally masculine.

"flaccidly plump figure"

"Skin too, was not as dark as those of the girls who worked in the fields"

- Love in the Cornhusks

The phrase "flaccidly plump figure" is used to describe the Senora's physical appearance, specifically her body shape. The use of the words "flaccidly plump figure" to describe the Senora's body shape in relation to weight shows the discourse of aging specifically for women. Such a language is an example of the cultural inscription of the body, in which specific aspects of a woman or girl's or physical appearance are linked with class, ethics, or value (Bordo 196).

"Skin too, was not as dark as those of the girls who worked in the fields", this description contrasts Tinang's skin tone with that of other girls, highlighting physical traits. The aspect of comparing Tinang's skin tone with the girls who work in the fields raises an issue on colorism, which is a type of discrimination that occurs within and across racial/ethnic categories where lighter skin is often privileged. This differentiation refers to as the colorism complex whereby people with lighter skins are generally considered

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to be of higher class especially in postcolonial societies (Hunter 249). The goal of highlighting Tinang's lighter skin tone, is a clear manifestation of an indirect socially constructed classification of preferred physical appearance.

"His body was as toned as ever, not an ounce of fat hanging from his belly."

"His fleshy legs were sprayed, muscles bulging in his jeans."

- Epiphany

It describes the male character's physique is a gendered term that reinforce masculine ideals of muscularity and fitness. The emphasis on the male character's toned body and lack of fat aligns with societal expectations and ideals of masculinity that are often associated with physical strength, athleticism, and a lean, muscular physique. According to their study published in the journal *Body Image*, researchers examined the representation of male bodies in popular media and found that "toned" and "muscular" were among the most commonly used descriptors for male physique (Jankowski 321). The author notes that these terms "reflect societal pressures for men to achieve a lean, muscular ideal."

It supports the 'hegemonic masculinity' idea presented by which view is that within a society there is a dominant form of masculinity towards which other forms of masculinity and femininity are subservient. One aspect that is part of this hegemonic masculinity in many of the contemporary Western and Western oriented societies is an ideal muscular male body. Although, objectification theory was done on women only, recently it has been applied on men as well (Fredrickson and Roberts 195). The idea of the fact that men do undergo body objectification, this is mostly associated with muscularity and leanness and thereby result in body image concerns and potentially damaging behaviors for the purposes of attaining such figures (Michaels et al., 175).

Table 3: Gender Portrayal in Linguistic Choices: Referential Gender

Referential Gender	Corpora						
	The Mats (Francisco Arecellana) - 1938	The Virgin (Kerima Polotan Tavera) - 1952	The Wedding Dance (Amador T. Daguio) - 1953	Magnificence (Estrella Alfon) - 1960	Love in the Cornhusks (Aida L. Rivera) - 1994	Epiphany (M. Protacio de Guzman) - 1996	Fish-Hair Woman (Merlinda Bobis) - 2012
Physical Descriptors		"But that evening, she was lost only for a while. The driver stopped at a corner that looked like a little-known part of the boulevard she passed each day and she alighted and stood on a street island, the passing headlights playing on her, a tired, shaken woman, the ruffles on her skirt crumpled,	"hard and strong" "sturdy and bronzed face"	"Vicente slapped the boy smartly on his lean hips, and said, Boys do not kiss boys."	"flaccidly pump figure" "Skin too, was not as dark as those of the girls who worked in the fields"	"His body was as toned as ever, not an ounce of fat hanging from his belly." "His fleshy legs were sprayed, muscles bulging in his jeans."	" twelve meters of very thick black hair with its streaks of red". "solemn green eyes, flecked with brown, and perfect curve of brow"

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		the hemline of her skirt away”					
Emotional/Behavioral Traits	"Do you think I'd forgotten? Do you think I had forgotten them? Do you think I could forget them?"	"A slow bitter anger began to form inside her."	"Awiyao's heart pitied her" "She almost seemed to smile" "She flung herself upon his knees and clung to them"	"There was nothing to fear, for the man was always so gentle, so kind."	"His eyes a black glow as he watched her draw near" "She resisted but his arms were strong"		"You see, Mamay, history hurts my hair, did you know that?" "Putang'ina, you're getting soft, big hair."
Gender Roles/Expectations	"I could not sleep of nights thinking of the young ones. They should never be allowed to play in the streets and your older ones should not stay out too late at night,"	"she was no beauty," "flat chest,"	"You are a woman and must have a child" "I am useless to you" "Awiyao's new wife will give him the children I could not"		"The Senora drank coffee with her and lectured about infancy care."	"He didn't notice my irritation. He never knew how to be sensitive at the right time." "Before she went away to work, she had gone to school and had reached the sixth grade."	"The village has owned my hair, why can't they have my bones as well?" "Fish with your hair, woman'. Always that command which summed up my life."

“twelve meters of very thick black hair with its streaks of red”

‘solemn green eyes, flecked with brown, and perfect curve of brow’

- Fish Hair Woman

The protagonist, the Fish-hair woman, physical characteristics is her extraordinarily long hair, which is describe as being ‘ twelve meters of very thick black hair with its streaks of red’’. The hair symbolizes her deep connection to the river and the memories of her people. She portrayed as ‘ tiny and dark coconut husk,’ highlighting her small stature and resilience, which are often associated with the traditional femininity and strength in adversity. Another is the protagonist lover, is depicted with ‘solemn green eyes, flecked with brown, and perfect curve of brow,’ showcasing foreignness and sensitivity compared to other characters.

As mentioned by Bobis, his physical description emphasizes his emotional vulnerability and his romantic, almost poetic nature, contrasting with the harsher realities faced by the locals. Literature frequently uses physical description to symbolize larger societal and gendered themes (Johnson 74). The author uses physical description to convey gendered experiences and symbolic meanings, making the individuals' bodily attributes reflect their inner lives and societal complements.

Emotional/Behavioral Traits

This phrase describes Miss Mijares' emotional reaction, highlighting an internalized bitterness and anger that gradually builds up. This could reflect stereotypical expectations of women's emotions being deeply internalized and potentially erupting in bursts of intensity. These conditions help filter out basic visual effects, making it easier to see the added impact of emotions (Jeffries 206).

"A slow bitter anger began to form inside her."

- The Virgin

It is said that emotional and behavioral traits are assigned to women in a stereotypical way. According to the study, it is describing as emotional stereotypes — they tend to describe women as very emotionally intense, as internalized as you can get (Diekman and Eagly 1179). "Slow" and "bitter" is used to describe the anger, which imbues the anger with the idea of a simmering, passive aggression often stereotypically attributed to female emotional expression and not usual with male emotional expression.

Taken together, this echoes a finding that displays of anger of women are often interpreted differently than when men display anger, with adverse consequences for women's professional and personal evaluation (Brescoll 209). In addition, anger is internalized "inside her"; explain that such internalization of anger is a common expression of gender role script that can have harmful effects on women' health and social inclusion (Haines et.al., 737). This is a small truck of language by which gender biases are perpetuated in a subtle manner because it carries female anger within exceedingly narrow, stereotypical parameters.

"Awiayao's heart pitied her,"

"She almost seemed to smile"

"She flung herself upon his knees and clung to them"

- The Wedding Dance

"Awiayao's heart pitied her,"⁴ emphasizes traditional male patience and emotional decisions placed on him and expresses Awiayao's great compassion and sadness. The line, "She almost seemed to smile" shows Lumnay's capacity for emotional resiliency. It conveys a complicated blend of love and grief and reflects social expectations surrounding silent suffering and female toughness. The line "She flung herself upon his knees and clung to them" captures Lumnay's emotional dependency and desperation while also showing her fragility and the intense emotional intensity that is expected of women in these kinds of situations.

"Do you think I'd forgotten? Do you think I had forgotten them? Do you think I could forget them?"

- Magnificence

This outburst reveals his deep emotional pain and inability to hide his grief despite trying to maintain composure. The passage from "The Mats" by Francisco Arcellana, illustrates Mr. Angeles' emotional complexity and his intense reaction to the mats woven for his deceased children alongside those for his living ones. His initial excitement and joy over the mats for his living children sharply contrast with his visceral reaction to those for his deceased daughters.

"His eyes a black glow as he watched her draw near"

"She resisted but his arms were strong,"

-Love in the Cornhusks

This description of Amado's gaze suggests emotional or romantic interest, reflecting emotional/behavioral traits. The phrase "She resisted but his arms were strong," describes an interaction between Tinang and Amado that implies gender-based emotional/behavioral traits. The juxtaposition of Tinang's resistance and Amado's strength creates an implication of gender roles and dynamics, where the female character initially resists or exhibits reluctance, and is expected to be more passive or demure while the male character exerts physical force or dominance and expected to be more forceful or aggressive, particularly in romantic or sexual contexts.

"You see, Mamay, history hurts my hair, did you know that?"

"Putang ina, you're getting soft, big hair."

- Fish Hair Woman

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According to the study, it emphasizes the protagonist's deep connection with her memories and past (Brody (133)). This is consistent with social conventions that connect emotional depth and introspection to women. The metaphor of history harming her hair highlights her vulnerability and sensitivity to her past while also alluded to her emotions and burdened heart. Ramon yanked at my braids, saying, "Putang ina, you're getting soft, big hair." This behavior is typical of men, who utilize force and physical domination to establish their supremacy. Ramon's actions highlight how men are expected by society to be tough and in charge, frequently at the expense of other people's emotional health.

Gender Roles/Expectations

The phrase reflects Mr. Angeles' paternal concern for his children's safety, suggesting a traditional, protective role within the family. "There was a name in the very centre of it Emilia. The letters were large, done in green. Flowers – Cadena – de – amor – were woven in and out among the letters," illustrates how the mats are not just objects but embodiments of personal histories and affections.

"I could not sleep of nights thinking of the young ones. They should never be allowed to play in the streets and your older ones should not stay out too late at night,"

"There was a name in the very centre of it emilia. The letters were large, done in green. Flowers – Cadena – de – amor – were woven in and out among the letters,"

- The Mats

"she was no beauty,"

"flat chest,"

- The Virgin

Phrases like "she was no beauty," "flat chest," and descriptions of her dressing to create an illusion of curves reinforce societal standards that judge women based on physical appearance. These biases imply that a woman's value is linked to her beauty and ability to conform to traditional feminine ideals, rather than her professional skills or personal qualities. Women perceive cultural body image norms, examined the level of body shame experienced when they view themselves as deviating from these norms, and assessed how internalizing these norms as personal ideals affects their experience of body-related shame (Bassenoff and Snow 728).

"You are a woman and must have a child,"

"I am useless to you,"

"Awi Yao's new wife will give him the children I could not,"

- The Wedding Dance

"You are a woman and must have a child," underlines conventional gender expectations in which women's value is connected to their capacity to have children, and it captures the social expectation put on Lumnay to carry out her job as a mother. The statement, "I am useless to you," demonstrates how deeply established and emotionally stressful these expectations are. It also shows how Lumnay has internalized societal norms which associate a woman's value with her fertility. "Awi Yao's new wife will give him the children I could not," emphasizes the cultural pressure placed on women to carry children, and how failing to do so is justifying a man's decision to seek a second wife, therefore perpetuating the gendered expectation that women should bear children.

"The Senora drank coffee with her and lectured about infancy care."

"Before she went away to work, she had gone to school and had reached the sixth grade."

-Love in the Cornhusks

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“The Senora drank coffee with her and lectured about infancy care.”² The Senora’s act of lecturing Tinang on childcare suggests gender roles and expectations related to motherhood and caregiving. “Before she went away to work, she had gone to school and had reached the sixth grade.” This statement about Tinang’s education level reflects gender roles and expectations regarding education and employment for women.

“He didn’t notice my irritation. He never knew how to be sensitive at the right time.”

“If not for his daily exercise, he would be obese.”

- Epiphany

“He didn’t notice my irritation. He never knew how to be sensitive at the right time.” “If not for his daily exercise, he would be obese.” These sentences suggest expectations or assumptions about the male character’s perceived lack of emotional sensitivity and the need for him to exercise regularly, which could be seen as reinforcing traditional gender roles or expectations for men.

‘Fish with your hair, woman’. Always that command which summed up my life.”

“The village has owned my hair, why can’t they have my bones as well?”

- Fish Hair Woman

“The village has owned my hair, why can’t they have my bones as well?” This sentence captures the protagonist’s overwhelming social pressure to forgo her personal well-being to further the greater good. This subject is frequently connected to conventional notions of women as selfless sacrifices. Women are typically expected to put the needs of their families and communities before their own (Moghadam 23). ‘Fish with your hair, woman’. Always that command which summed up my life.”, this demonstrates a larger trend in society that values women more for their roles and contributions than for their unique identities and goals. This point of view reflects historical and cultural conventions that value women’s ability to meet social expectations more than their freedom of choice and uniqueness as individuals (Chodorow 276).

The analysis notes that physical attributes evoke gender stereotype such that muscular manly man and cameras that fix on the image of women or skin color. Emotional and behavior identified reflects gender conformity where males are presented as less sensitive while females as complex or vulnerable. Femininity and masculinity are questioned and set in the following forms where the women are portrayed as mothers, caregivers’ sacrificial beings while the men are portrayed as providers and makers of decisions.

On the other hand, gender prejudices and discrimination remain a prominent issue in the Filipino literature of all the periods between 1938 and 2012. But it is important to understand that there are some differences in the representation of these biases. In such early pieces as ‘The Mats’ 1938 and the ‘Wedding Dance’ 1953 Moreno depicts women as baby makers or baby bearers confined to the home. When turning to later works such as ‘Fish-Hair Woman’ (1996) or ‘Epiphany’ (2012), although the division of roles based on sex remains strident, the characters and their feeling are depicted in a more diverse manner. For example, while in the “Fish-Hair Woman” the character of a fish-haired woman is also highly significant this is not an exploitation of a type of a female character as happens in deconstructionist fiction but it focuses on ‘woman as symbol of a community’s expectations.’ Nonetheless, one must agree that even in the later works much attention is paid to the gender stereotypes when it comes to physical appearances and the behavior of characters.

II. Traditional Prejudices:

Circumstance. The symbolism of personalized gifts also triggers an examination of the fabric of the connectedness within the family. First, Mr. Angeles’ process of finding an expert mat weaver, and then commissioning mats for each family member, it refers to as “gift-giving as a social process” (Mauss 156). Next, the borders of the mat or pattern are personalized, with individual names. Color is used to connote birthstones- the month that each person was born. The level of personalization suggests, objects could be deeply enmeshed in the extended self and it invites a thoughtful consideration of identity.

“I have met a marvelous mat weaver a real artist and I shall have a surprise for you. I asked him to weave a sleeping mat for everyone in the family.”

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Value is increased when the gift is a unique meld of art and identity- something that was "for you", not just generically "a mat" in one of several colors. The extended self, applied to this situation, means that the mats Mr. Angeles has commissioned have more personal significance to the lubirola family. The personalized mats, in many ways, social, personal, and economic dimensions of gift-giving as a useful framework for understanding the nature of the gifts (Sherry 161). The anticipation and growing excitement about the mats that Mr. Angeles has commissioned echoes another Cobble-Sequeners' concept- that of "psychic energy".

Lastly, Adler, the emphasis on birthstones and names could reflect that, giving birth to a child, and the process of birthing, could be seen as a transformative event for the woman (qtd Sultan and Subha 426). Equally, it is also transformative to the child, and to the family, have posited the "toddler years" are marked by a child's first personal identity markers, or "key signs", through which the child learned to understand herself. Because the Mr. Angeles' mat is so deeply enmeshed in the creation of personality and identity- the birthstone and the name. This particular gift can be suggested in terms of family social systems theory can be seen as solidifying family units, by giving the individual members of the family unique recognition within the family structure (Bowen 296).

"She liked poufs and shirring's and little girlish pastel colors. On her bodice, astride or lengthwise, there sat an inevitable row of thick camouflaging ruffles that made her look almost as though she had a bosom, if she bent her shoulders slightly and inconspicuously drew her neckline open to puff some air into her bodice."

- The Virgin

This conservative society explores how physical appearances, societal expectations and moral judgments meet. The use of clothing in order to look more feminine is an example of how women are influenced by the concept of beauty which is also evident in their personality and appearance. This supports Fredrickson & Roberts' (1997) objectification theory, which holds that females adopt a viewer perspective towards their own bodies resulting into attempts to conform them to social standards. Bordo's description of Miss Mijares' looks as well as her efforts to appear heavier around her hips are in line with her work highlighting how women's bodies become cultural sites filled with societal pressures.

Table 4: Traditional Prejudices: Circumstance

Corpora	Traditional Prejudices: Circumstance
	Phrases
The Mats (Francisco Arcellana) - 1938	"I have met a marvelous mat weaver a real artist and I shall have a surprise for you. I asked him to weave a sleeping mat for everyone in the family."
The Virgin (Kerima Polotan Tuvera) -1952	"She liked poufs and shirring's and little girlish pastel colors. On her bodice, astride or lengthwise, there sat an inevitable row of thick camouflaging ruffles that made her look almost as though she had a bosom, if she bent her shoulders slightly and inconspicuously drew her neckline open to puff some air into her bodice."
The Wedding Dance (Amador T. Daguio) - 1953	"You know that I've done my best to give you a child"
Magnificence (Estrella Alfon) – 1960	"He's only a bus conductor, don't ask him for too many things."
Love in the Cornhusks (Aida L. Rivera) - 1994	"Inggo, her husband waiting for her, his body stinking of Tuba and sweat, squatting on the floor, clad only in his foul undergarments".
Epiphany (M. Protacio de Guzman) -1996	"I told myself: I'm never ever going to fall for a gym instructor again."
Fish-Hair Woman (Merlinda Bobis) - 2012	" I am a Filipina, tiny and dark as a coconut husk, but what red fires glint on my head!" "tiny and dark as a coconut husk."

Judgments on the basis of morality interact with societal norms surrounding family structure and parenthood when discussing whether a carpenter has a woman or is married. The carpenter who fathered without marrying shocked Miss Mijares because this was like what Goffman (269) referred to as stigmatization- which is an attribute causing loss of credit during certain social situations. As seen in the analysis of Deinstitutionalization: The deinstitutionalization of American marriage, Journal of Marriage and Family, traditional values for family get challenged by such instances, where there tends to be a conflict between traditional views on family roles and contemporary realities (Cherlin 855).

"You know that I've done my best to give you a child"

- The Wedding Dance

In Amador Daguio's "The Wedding Dance," the circumstances of the protagonists expose ingrained prejudices. The phrase draws attention to the prejudice and pressure that society places on women to have children, suggesting that a woman's worth frequently has to do with her capacity to have children. This reflects deep prejudices in the culture that place an importance on women's reproductive functions. Furthermore, the traditional expectation that males must maintain their lineage, frequently at the expense of their existing companions, is demonstrated by Awiyao's decision to marry another woman to fulfill his desire for children.

This shows a cultural prejudice that prioritizes male lineage continuation over female mental health and marital faithfulness. As discussed in the research on the cultural strains and demands upon women to become mothers, the value placed on childbirth in evaluating a woman's value echoes feminist criticism of pronatalist views (Meyers 759). This reflects societal pressure which is described as the universal subordination of females that linked to their biological reproductive function (Ortner 36).

Awiyao's decision to remarry for procreation shows that patrilineal anxiety exists, as noted when she studies infertility and gender in the Middle East (Inhorn 9). It demonstrates how men prioritize survival of male lineage to marital bonds and female well-being thus exemplifying hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, through this story, it becomes possible to explain individual choices and societal norms based on intersectionality involving gender, power and cultural expectations.

This conflict brings forth what anthropologist refers to as the "sex/gender system" in which human social activity converts biological distinctions into differences between sexes (Rubin 169). Thus, failure to conceive becomes a social problem which threatens the marriage bond and an individual's status within the community.

"He's only a bus conductor, don't ask him for too many things."

- Magnificence

The excerpt provided reveals the complex ways in which socioeconomic status, gender roles, and parental socio-contextual norms interconnect. The mother's deprecatory response to the bus driver's occupation reflects a shared belief in society that equates a person's worth with their economic capital. This example is congruent with theorizing on social class and how social class shapes parental beliefs about who is-capable-of-what, and how class is related to it (Bourdieu 412).

The mother's distinction in the instructions she gives to her children in this short interaction also reflects the routine and enduring nature of gender roles in the family setting West and Zimmerman (134), typically extending to traditional societal expectations of what children "ought to" do domestically, in their future working roles, and in even "who" they "ought to" be as they grow older. According to Eccles et al., with the different instructions to her son to "behave" and "study" and calling her daughter for a different objective supports and reinforces gender-specific familial obligations, and norms and familial expectations (qtd. Tenenbaum and Leaper 615).

These examples of classed and gendered routine in social practices are ways in which attitudes and norms are transmitted and circulate, perhaps reproducing not just gendered narratives, but also socioeconomic biases in the social order, and family structures (Cunningham 194). It is the way in which classed and gendered practices linked to social institutions and practices enact how daily routines operate. These "everyday" social practices are theoretical and empirical focal points for this article because they are some ways beliefs about expectations for gender, work, and 'merit' are learned and enacted.

"Inggo, her husband waiting for her, his body stinking of Tuba and sweat, squatting on the floor, clad only in his foul undergarments".

- Love in the Cornhusks

The character Inggo's presentation gives readers an understanding of the continuing gender types and toxic masculinity in literature. Connell and Messerschmidt (844). label it as "subordinated masculinities" which is a part of what has been used to define Inggo. It reflects, supports and possibly perpetuates some prejudices prevalent within society about class, gender roles and codes of acceptable male behavior. Kimmel () refers to this process as "othering" where masculinity is constructed by contrasting with other forms that are perceived as less appropriate or inferior.

In other word, it uses the term 'othering' to explain that Amado has qualities considered ideal which contrast with Inggo's undesirable characteristics. This could contribute to Pleck's (83) notion of male gender role strain whereby ideals forcing men into rigid roles they may not be able to

play comfortably become a source of psychological stress for them.

This perspective with regards to Inggo's dirtiness and substance abuse association (tuba) highlights the class, masculinity and social expectation intersections. The portrayal aligns with ethnographic work in inner-city cultures where substance use and

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specific activities are bound by masculinity in marginalized communities. Also, the portrayal of Inngo's negative qualities as intrinsically tied to his identity as a husband and father is what the continuation of harmful gender norms through cultural narratives. This representation may reinforce toxic masculinities, which Kupers (719) argues, is a term used to describe those socially backward traits that men hold onto just to dominate others, devalue women, or dislike gays or lesbians without any reason at all.

"I told myself: I'm never ever going to fall for a gym instructor again."

- Epiphany

The phrase "I told myself: I'm never ever going to fall for a gym instructor again" carries a dismissive looking-down tone. The use of "fall for" implies that the narrator now sees dating a gym instructor as a mistake or lapse in judgement that he regrets. By outright stating he will never date a gym instructor again based solely on their occupation, the narrator reveals his prejudice that their job alone makes them an undesirable partner. This is an example of occupational prejudice. Describing the man's snores as "loud snores rudely stabbed the silence around us" can be seen as playing into traditional gender stereotypes that portray men's bodily functions in a negative or uncouth light. This ties into broader societal prejudices and double standards when it comes to judging behavior deemed "unladylike" or inappropriate for women versus men. Gendered stereotypes about bodily propriety leads to harsher judgements of women's bodily functions compared to men's, reflecting enduring societal expectations that women should be more restrained and decorous in their behavior. This double standard noting that "When men burp or fart, it's seen as a normative instance of masculine behavior. But when women do it, they're seen as violating femininity norms of being dainty and inoffensive.

"I am a Filipina, tiny and dark as a coconut husk, but what red fires glint on my head!"

- Fish-Hair Woman

The protagonist's self-description reflects deeply rooted prejudices on ideals of beauty. A societal bias that favors lighter skin tones and larger body frames which are frequently viewed as more beautiful, or desirable is highlighted by the expression "tiny and dark as a coconut husk." Filipino views of appearance are still influenced by colonial beauty standards, which are the source of this prejudice. Research on Philippine beauty standards shows that these stereotypes from the colonial era still exist and influence how people view beautiful now. According to David (), shows that skin-whitening treatments are still widely available in Filipino markets, which contributes to the country's attraction for lighter skin tones.

The protagonist's self-awareness of her "red fires" in her hair also suggests a contrast with her other "undesirable" traits, implying an emotional confusion brought on by these social norms. As stated by Rondilla and Spikard, (), the challenge that many Filipinos confront in balancing their natural features against imposed standards of beauty is reflected in this internalized prejudice.

The analysis considers how these texts reinforce society's prejudice in gender roles and beauty norms, income and ethnicity, cultural norms, etc. Some of the topics that the paper will consider include toxic masculinity, colorism, pronatalism and classism, relative to the presentation of the literary works and sociological theories. Analyzing the role of specific quotes and situations from each of the texts, the work shows how such work reinforces prejudice in Filipino society and how it intertwines with questions of identity, gender roles and family values.

To add to this, looking at the Filipino literature from 1938-2012, it was found that gender biases are present in all the periods, although the form and degree may be different. In the Mansfield's earlier work like 'The Mats' published in 1938 and 'The Wedding Dance' published in 1953 woman are portrayed in a number way and her worth is measured by her capacity to reproduce and to do domestic work. Wales in the later works, like "Love in the Cornhusks" (1994) and "Epiphany" (2012) portrays traditional gender expectations but there is a deeper look into the characters' personality and social influence.

However, prejudice as a concept based on appearance, job status, roles to be performed or otherwise has been present over the decades. For example, "The Virgin" (1952) and 'Fish-Hair Woman' (1996) are two narratives concerning beauty in women regardless of the difference in the time period in which they were written. What can be also observed in some of the later works is that although prejudices are illustrated in a more complicated and seemingly philosophical or ironic manner, the stereotype of the 'weaker' female and the 'stronger', 'wise' male is still there. Unfortunately, what this study has revealed is the fact that despite the evolution in gender roles, prejudice in society does exist and affects the Filipino literature of the observed years.

CONCLUSIONS

The depiction of gender in literature shows that gender implements different stereotyped cognitive structures that reflect gender roles and social standards. Furthermore, gender can be combined with such variables as race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, making the representation and discrimination even more complex.

These findings are very meaningful for the creation of literatures and their further analysis. It underlines a pursuit for better and/differences representation of gender in literature as the existing ones contribute towards the stereotyping of gender. It also acknowledges the need for critical consciousness among the writers and the readers in making the right choices on language that perpetuates gender or subvert them. In educational interventions, such analyses could be used to promote gender consciousness in regard to works of literature and media.

Moreover, the significance of historical and cultural backgrounds regarding the representation of genders in literature. They also identify possible lines of further research, for example, concerning the changes in modern literature in terms of its gender positioning and expanding this type of study to other types of mass media and cultural commodities. Last of all, this discussion on gender in literature creates awareness of enduring social prejudices in literature and the need for unity of not only gender but also genre in literature to address such prejudices.

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