

The Gender Constructs on Women in Indigenous Society in Amador Daguio's *The Wedding Dance*

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of gender constructs on women as portrayed in Amador T. Daguio's *The Wedding Dance*. The story follows Lumnay, whose inability to bear a child compels her husband, Awiyao, to remarry in accordance with the cultural expectation to produce an heir. The analysis focuses on how plot, characters, and imagery reveal the impact of gender constructs on women in the narrative. Guided by Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory and supported by Viktor Shklovsky's Formalism, Judith Butler's Gender Performativity, and Adrienne Rich's Cultural Feminism, this study employs a qualitative discourse analysis. Plot analysis uses Freytag's Plot Structure, textual evidence, and cause-and-effect relationships to analyze gender constructs in the plot, while character analysis explores characterization and motivation shaped by gender constructs, and imagery analysis identifies imagery category, lines, imagery description, and Cordilleran Cultural Traditions, to investigate gender constructs. The findings suggest that Amador T. Daguio's *The Wedding Dance* contains gender constructs. Through a plot analysis, it reveals that the short story's narrative, particularly on the aspect of traditional practices and cultural expectations dictating the lives of the characters, affects even the most intimate marriages in the context of the story's setting. Additionally, the character analysis manifests that the societal norms present in the story perpetuate gender constructs on women through studying the characterization and motivation of the characters. Furthermore, some imagery in the short story outlines firmly entrenched gender constructs, such as masculine authority and a feminine silent struggle, through the aid of an in-depth imagery analysis. The findings of this study may deepen the understanding of how literature reflects and perpetuates gender constructs on women, particularly in the context of Philippine indigenous culture. Such insights can encourage critical discussions that challenge restrictive gender expectations and promote more inclusive narratives for women in literary studies for future researchers.

Keywords: character analysis, gender constructs, imagery analysis, plot analysis, *The Wedding Dance*.

1. Introduction

Literature reflects society and drives social change by challenging norms to reveal how social hierarchies and cultural norms are shaped by gender structures (Altun, 2023). Through literature, writers craft short stories that reflect and critique the cultural realities of their time, ideal for examining societal and

gender structures (Na et al., 2024). Filipino writers like Amador T. Daguio uses short stories to explore themes of family, community, tradition, and identity, revealing the cultural forces that shape society (Eteb, 2020).

Amador T. Daguio's *The Wedding Dance* (1953) is set in a traditional Filipino tribal society where Lumnay's infertility leads her husband, Awiyao, to take a new wife, revealing how societal expectations shape gender roles and oppress women. (Solanon et al., 2024).

According to Bainbridge, social constructs exist through human interaction rather than objective reality, shaping what society considers "natural." One key construct is gender, which reinforces hierarchical binaries that disadvantage women, such as their lower workforce participation compared to men (Sundy Locus, GMA Integrated News). Gender is not innate but socially created alongside systems that privilege certain groups.

In order to examine the gender constructs on women in indigenous society in Amador T. Daguio's *The Wedding Dance*, plot, character, and imagery must be discussed.

In *What Is a Plot?*, plot is defined as the structured sequence of events and their relationships. The causal links between events reveal character motives and the progression of the story, including the influence of social constructs and traditions (Egan, 1978).

Plot structures are commonly classified as the Aristotelian three-act structure namely beginning, middle, and end (Aristotle, 1968) and Freytag's Pyramid, which includes exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution (Freytag, 1895). Other plot types include episodic, parallel, and flashback structures (Pardede, 2020). Plot structure shapes narrative effectiveness and influences how readers interpret the story.

The term character comes from the Greek *kharaktēr*, meaning a stamping tool, highlighting each character's distinct mark. Understanding characterization is essential in analyzing Amador T. Daguio's *The Wedding Dance*, as it reveals characters' motivations and behaviors. Fictional characters shape culture and social constructs (Vermeule, 2009), and guide questions further support analysis by clarifying their roles in the plot (Caleb, 2024).

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Examining imagery deepens readers' understanding by revealing themes, emotions, and subtle meanings. Through sensory types such as visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, kinesthetic, and gustatory imagery draws on shared human experiences, making narratives vivid and emotionally engaging, while guiding analysis of a text's thematic and symbolic layers (Matrix English Team).

A relevant article explains that imagery in literature is analyzed through descriptive language, sensory details, and figurative devices, which bring narratives to life and deepen emotional and thematic understanding (Daisie Team, 2023). It stresses that imagery should be used selectively as a "show, don't tell" technique to enhance key moments without slowing the plot or overpowering character development (Kole). When balanced effectively, imagery enriches storytelling and serves as a powerful tool for exploring social constructs, including women's experiences within patriarchal contexts.

Amy Wilson's *The Social Construct of Gender* distinguishes biological sex from culturally shaped gender. From childhood, individuals internalize gendered expectations that privilege men as leaders and women as caregivers, reinforcing inequality over time (Wilson, 2019). Wilson's work is relevant to *The Wedding Dance*, highlighting how oppressive gender roles are socially constructed and maintained.

Literary studies reveal that women are often depicted as symbols shaped by social expectations rather than autonomous individuals, reflecting societal prejudice (Dibra & Jashari, 2024). Similar patterns appear in Gibran's *The Broken Wings*, where patriarchal norms marginalize and disempower women (Amjad & Hussain, 2024). Such works show how literature mirrors gender inequality rooted in social constructs.

Central to this discussion is patriarchy, defined as a social system that oppresses women (Walby, 1989). Everyday gender roles are reinforced through patriarchy, as seen in J.P. Clark's *The Wives' Revolt*, where control over food and domestic duties symbolizes women's oppression and potential resistance (Esan, 2022). Women in literature are expected to be nurturing mothers, obedient wives, and dutiful homemakers, with daughters trained in domestic skills (Asri & Hayati, 2018). English literature has long reflected patriarchal dominance and stereotyping women (Hiwarkhedka & Sharma, 2022) while limiting their creative agency, a condition later challenged by feminist movements (Gibney, 2024). Similar struggles appear in Asian literature, where women resist entrenched patriarchal norms (Allagbé & Amoussou, 2020).

Studies on *The Wedding Dance* show how patriarchal authority shapes gender roles: Awiyao's linguistic dominance reflects male power, while Lumnay's emotional expressiveness highlights constrained female agency (Serdeña, 2022). Male desire and cultural duty further justify women's subservience (Gilbas, 2014), and historical analyses reveal the marginalization of women in Philippine society (Bangayan, 2022; Alcantara, 1994).

Ethnographic studies on Cordilleran culture provide cultural grounding for *The Wedding Dance*. Marriage, fertility, rituals, heirlooms, and peace systems emphasize lineage, communal responsibility, and gendered roles (Prill-Brett et al., 2016;

Basatan, 2020; Anacin, 2015; Muyco, 2016; Yakal, 2017; Vecaldo et al., 2015; Caison et al., 1997; Yangyang et al., 2024).

Overall, these studies show how gender constructs shape women's roles in literature and society. This study builds on them by examining *The Wedding Dance*, exploring women's struggles between cultural expectations and personal desires, and linking literary analysis with gender and cultural studies.

However, despite the considerable research done on Amador Dagui's *The Wedding Dance* through various literary lenses, there remains a lack of study on the impact of gender roles on women using a constructivist lens. Glibas's study emphasizes Awiyao's dissatisfaction with Lumnay's inability to bear a child, highlighting machismo and the justification of his actions (2014). Moreover, current research often does not use *The Wedding Dance* as the sole focus, as seen in Macasaet and Maranan's comparative study, which underscores the story's emphasis on tradition and cultural values in response to infertility (2015).

This study investigates the gender constructs on women in an indigenous society in Amador T. Dagui's *The Wedding Dance*. Specifically, it delves into the story's plot, characters, and imagery, while also incorporating a creative writeback to further explore and interpret the narrative's representation of women's experiences.

This study assumes that the short story *The Wedding Dance* by Amador T. Dagui shows the gender constructs on women in indigenous society.

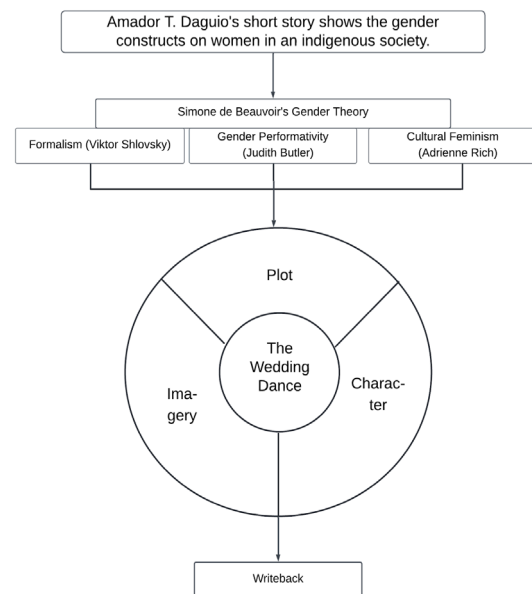


Fig. 1. The schematic presentation of the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study

This assumption is supported by the following: Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory, Viktor Shklovsky's Formalism, Judith Butler's Gender Performativity, and Adrienne Rich's Cultural Feminism.

In *The Wedding Dance*, the plot is analyzed to reveal gender constructs, especially the roles imposed on women.

Shklovsky's Art as a Technique argues that art should be perceived rather than merely understood, making perception an aesthetic act and encouraging readers to move beyond conventional interpretations (Youvan, n.d.). When paired with Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956), Shklovsky's formalist concept of defamiliarization highlights how narrative form exposes socially constructed gender realities and prompts critical reflection on cultural norms (Shklovsky, 1917).

Judith Butler's Gender Performativity Theory (1990) further informs the analysis by challenging essentialist views of masculinity and femininity as biologically determined. Gender is socially constructed through repeated performances, which create hierarchies and marginalize those who deviate from norms (Szorenyi, n.d.). These performances shape gender identities through actions, movements, and roles (Wilson, n.d.). Together, Judith Butler's and Simone de Beauvoir's theories illustrate how characters in *The Wedding Dance* enact socially imposed gender roles.

To deepen the analysis of imagery, Adrienne Rich's Cultural Feminism (1976) is applied to explore how gender constructs shape women's roles within male-centered systems. In *Of Woman Born*, Adrienne Rich defines patriarchy as a social system that enforces male dominance by linking women's value to reproduction and family roles, marginalizing those who do not conform.

Simone de Beauvoir's view of women as both revered and oppressed parallels Adrienne Rich's critique of patriarchal idealization, where biological differences are exaggerated to justify women's confinement to social servitude (Rich, 1976). Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956) provides the structural basis for understanding women's marginalization, while Rich's Cultural Feminism contextualizes these dynamics within specific cultural pressures. Analyzing the imagery of *The Wedding Dance* through these lenses reveals how patriarchal norms are reinforced or questioned, exposing deeper gender constructs shaping women's experiences.

In conclusion, this study shows that *The Wedding Dance* is more than a story about love and loss—it is a powerful reflection of how socially constructed gender norms shape and restrict women's lives in a traditional Filipino tribal society. By examining the plot, characters, and imagery through the lenses of Simone de Beauvoir, Viktor Shklovsky, Judith Butler, and Adrienne Rich, the analysis reveals how patriarchy and tradition quietly dictate women's roles, choices, and sense of self. Lumnay's experience, in particular, captures the emotional weight of being torn between personal longing and cultural expectation. Through this reading and the creative writeback, the study highlights literature's ability to give voice to women's struggles, question deeply rooted norms, and imagine possibilities for change, reinforcing the relevance of feminist inquiry in addressing ongoing gender inequalities in Philippine society.

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research design, specifically discourse analysis, to examine how language in *The Wedding Dance* constructs and reinforces gendered social realities

(Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Discourse analysis allows the examination of cultural norms, traditions, and power relations embedded in the text, revealing inferred meanings shaped by social structures (Tsindos, 2023). This method serves as the primary approach for analyzing context clues and inferences in the story, offering insight into how language contributes to cultural values and social systems.

The primary data source is Philippine Short Stories 1941–1955 (1981; 2nd printing 2008), published by the University of the Philippines Press. Amador T. Daguiog's *The Wedding Dance* appears on page 505.

The secondary data sources include scholarly articles, academic websites, electronic books, and published or unpublished theses and dissertations relevant to Cordilleran culture, gender theory, and literary criticism.

The study follows four phases: Phase 1. Plot Analysis, Phase 2. Character Analysis, Phase 3. Imagery Analysis, and Phase 4. Creative Writeback.

Phase 1 conducts a plot analysis of Amador T. Daguiog's *The Wedding Dance* using Freytag's Pyramid (1895). Viktor Shklovsky's defamiliarization (1917) and Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956) are applied to examine gender constructs and illustrate how the narrative challenges traditional views of love and marriage. The table presents the plot structure, textual evidence, cause-and-effect relationships, Cordilleran traditions, and gender constructs.

Phase 2 focuses on analyzing the characters in *The Wedding Dance*. Their motivations and cultural identities are examined using Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956) and Judith Butler's Gender Performativity (1990) to reveal the gender constructs imposed on women. The table organizes each character's traits, relevant Cordilleran traditions, textual evidence, and the gender expectations that shape their roles.

Phase 3. presents the analysis of the imagery. Imagery is categorized and examined using Adrienne Rich's Cultural Feminism (1976) alongside Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956) helping readers understand the profound emotions and cultural significance embedded in Amador T. Daguiog's *The Wedding Dance*. The table systematically categorizes the imagery, lines from the text, imagery description, Cordilleran cultural traditions, gender constructs on women.

Phase 4. consists of a creative writeback in the form of a reflective poem that serves as a creative analytical response, synthesizing insights from the plot, character, and imagery analyses. This imaginative component explores alternative perspectives on gender constructs and deepens engagement with the narrative.

The study follows ethical standards by avoiding harm, adhering to legal and academic guidelines, and ensuring proper citation. It upholds integrity through accurate and unbiased data interpretation. With no physical or psychological risks involved, its value lies in responsibly addressing gaps on gender constructs in patriarchal and indigenous contexts, contributing to feminist and cultural studies. Full transparency is maintained in reporting the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

This part presents the results and discussion of the subproblems.

A. Plot Analysis

The table below presents a plot analysis of Amador T. Daguió's *The Wedding Dance*, highlighting how the story portrays the tension between personal desires and societal expectations through its characters' emotional and psychological struggles.

Using Freytag's plot structure, the analysis examines key events and cause-and-effect relationships within Cordilleran cultural traditions to reveal gender constructs. Viktor Shlovsky's defamiliarization and Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory further illuminate how the narrative challenges conventional perceptions of love and marriage. The story follows Awiyao and Lumnay, whose marriage is strained by Lumnay's inability to bear children—a critical societal expectation—showing their conflict between personal feelings and cultural demands.

Viktor Shklovsky's (1917) concept of defamiliarization, which renders the familiar “unfamiliar” to prolong perceptual engagement, is central to Amador T. Daguió's *The Wedding Dance*. The story uses this technique to explore gender constructs, particularly regarding women, presenting events through emotion, gesture, and subtle narrative cues rather than explicit narration. Daguió reframes the story not simply as lost love but as an exploration of emotional bonds constrained by tradition and societal expectation. Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory helps analyze Lumnay's perceived inadequacy: she is deemed a “failed” wife not due to personal shortcomings but because she cannot fulfill the cultural expectation of bearing an heir, showing how social norms construct womanhood (Beauvoir, 1956).

Using Freytag's Plot Structure, the exposition opens with Awiyao entering a dark room and apologizing to the “listening darkness,” foreshadowing their separation. Lumnay's silence conveys resignation to tradition. When Awiyao suggests another man might marry her, she refuses, demonstrating both

her personal desire and the weight of societal expectations (Prill-Brett et al., 2016). Cordilleran customs link a woman's value to fertility, leaving Lumnay burdened while Awiyao's remarriage fulfills the community's expectation to produce an heir (Basatan, 2020). This contrast highlights gendered consequences: women bear emotional and social penalties, while men are socially justified in taking another wife.

The rising action deepens tension as the reasons for their separation unfold. Lumnay's grief and resignation are conveyed through memories and gestures, defamiliarized through imagery such as crossing the mountain stream—a symbol of both love and isolation. Awiyao seeks to absolve himself, while Lumnay internalizes the cultural expectation that infertility is her fault. Rituals such as Pasang, performed to appeal to Kabunyan for fertility, emphasize the social pressure on women (Basatan, 2020). Although Lumnay excels in domestic skills, her reproductive inability overshadows these achievements, demonstrating childbearing as central to women's societal value. Women in literature are often portrayed through patriarchal lenses, with worth tied to obedience, domestic skill, and fertility (Asri & Hayati, 2018).

In the climax, the story critiques the prioritization of lineage over emotional bonds. Awiyao acknowledges Lumnay's domestic skills but insists on remarrying to fulfill his duty. Lumnay's emotional turmoil, revealed through Daguió's defamiliarized narration, shows the profound cost of internalized societal norms, reducing her identity to reproductive capability. Cordilleran concepts of tumawid (heir) and matawid (inheritance) contextualize the unequal pressures: men's social standing depends on producing an heir, while women are judged on enabling that process (Yangyang, 2024).

During the falling action, Lumnay reflects on the wedding celebrations she is excluded from, her memories of Awiyao and shared moments in nature illustrating loss and acceptance. Her withdrawal into the bean fields symbolizes the negotiation between personal desire and societal duty, showing how traditions limit women's autonomy while shaping emotional experience. Motherhood (pandokon) is idealized as a blessing, and Lumnay's suffering demonstrates how cultural

Table 1
Plot analysis

Plot Structure (Freytag)	Textual Evidence	Cause-and-Effect Relationships		Cordilleran Cultural Traditions	Gender Constructs
Exposition	6-7 25-29	Cause: Awiyao and Lumnay refuse to join the wedding celebration	Effect: They isolated themselves, revealing how custom restrict women's choices	Customary marriage	Women's roles are bound by the marital tradition to bear an heir.
Rising Action	119-123	Cause: Adherence to the tradition of needing an heir	Effect: Unable to give birth to a child, Lumnay blames herself for their separation	Pasang – a sacrificial ritual linked to female fertility problems	Woman's worth tied to motherhood; man's role to lineage.
Climax	135-141 156-166 177-180	Cause: They feared communal judgement	Effect: Awiyao returns to the wedding celebrations, showing the weight of tradition	Tumawid and matawid—the continuity of lineage and heritage	Men uphold lineage and public honor; women endure sacrifice and exclusion.
Falling Action	197-205	Cause: Lumnay confronts the custom that caused their separation.	Effect: The celebration halts her resistance, affirming tradition's influence	Customary divorce due to childlessness	Childlessness places blame on women, reinforcing unequal marital expectations.
Resolution	243-253	Cause: Lumnay reaches the river, a symbol of their	Effect: She yields to tradition, symbolized by nature and the calmness of it.	Pandokon (pregnancy) as bendisyon (blessing)	Female sacrifice is seen as acceptance of tradition; motherhood idealized as

expectations tie women's value to reproductive roles (Basatan, 2020).

Ultimately, *The Wedding Dance* shows how gender constructs govern personal and social identity. Through defamiliarization, Daguio presents the separation of Lumnay and Awiyao as an interplay of cultural obligation, personal desire, and emotional constraint. The narrative critiques traditions prioritizing lineage over love, highlighting women's confinement under patriarchal expectations and the uneven distribution of social consequences, with women bearing the brunt of social "death" when reproductive expectations are unmet. By weaving cultural context, defamiliarization, and gender theory, Daguio explores how traditions shape identity, emotions, and human relationships.

B. Character Analysis

Findings from phase 2 utilize Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956) and Judith Butler's Gender Performativity Theory (1990) to analyze the characterization in Amador T. Daguio's *The Wedding Dance*, revealing facets of gender constructs affecting women in the story's Cordilleran society.

As shown in the table 2, the story revolved around three characters: Awiyao, Lumnay, and Madulimay. In the Cordilleran cultural tradition, maintaining cultural continuity is highly emphasized through their established concepts, such as the maipatawid or to pass on to scion and the tumawid or to accept the responsibility (Yangyang, 2024). Since the backdrop of Daguio's (1953) *The Wedding Dance* involves the Cordilleran society, the characterization in the story is widely influenced by cultural beliefs and practices.

Amador T. Daguio's (1953) *The Wedding Dance* characters faced internal conflict as they grappled against the firmly entrenched gender constructs. Each character carries their own part in maintaining their cultural practices. Nonetheless, through the use of Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956) and Judith Butler Performativity Theory (1990), it was revealed that women carried the heaviest weight.

The analysis uncovers the repressive traits of Awiyao, Lumnay's husband, as he had remained adamant in the pursuit of following their traditions, suggesting he must remarry after Lumnay's failure to bear a child to be his heir. Though Awiyao blatantly showed in lines 6 to 7 his remorse from having to obliged with their customs, lines 17 to 19 manifested his repressive behavior towards his wife. In line 20, he continued to prod Lumnay to dance with other men instead of solving the

issue at hand. As if it was not enough, in lines 24 to 25, Awiyao manipulated Lumnay to dance with other men to show that she did not hate him for their separation.

Judith Butler argues that gender is an act of doing, rather than purely being (1990). Drawing from the behavior of Awiyao, it is apparent that he is adhering to gender constructs, notwithstanding its repercussions. Lines 24 to 26 shows the subtle oppressive impact of Awiyao's repressive behavior as he coerced Lumnay to dance with other men so that one of them may like her and marry her. Beauvoir penned that for much in history, women are viewed as the Other (1956). Such a notion can be applied in the way Awiyao fumbled for solutions to redirect Lumnay's attention rather than admitting his shortcomings.

Lumnay was relegated to the position of the Other when Awiyao left her after failing to comply with the duties assigned to her gender. Moreover, in lines 33 to 34 and 36 to 39, repressive tendency is observed from Awiyao as he uttered words that prove his willingness to perform gender roles, leading to what Butler defined as gender performativity (1990). He loved Lumnay, but his duties to their community preceded his passion. Through Awiyao's characterization, the tumawid, one of Cordilleran cultural traditions is emphasized, implying that masculinity is measured by procreation and lineage continuity.

On the other hand, Lumnay, Awiyao's wife is characterized as a submissive wife. In the Cordilleran culture depicted in the story, the couple's separation is justified by their childlessness. Divorce in Cordilleran society does not signify failure, rather it is an act of cultural survival (Prill-Brett et. al., 2016). Though their separation was impending and inevitable, given Awiyao and Lumnay's situation, the latter was left in sheer devastation because the blame was heavier on her shoulder.

A society that deems a woman as the Other, would demand her to prioritize societal norms (Beauvoir, 1956). Lumnay's submissive characteristic is apparent in lines 41 and 42 when she stated that she did everything to have a child, even to the extent of forgetting her own worth. External factors can influence women's thought and experience (Butler, 1990). Due to this, even if in line 27 Lumnay directly stated that she did not want another man, she had no choice but to let go of her husband, adhering to the norms in their society.

Furthermore, lines 111-115 elucidates Lumnay's desperation to please Awiyao. She begged Awiyao by reminding him of all

Table 2
Character analysis

Character	Characterization	Cordilleran Cultural Traditions	Textual Evidence	Gender Constructs
Awiyao	Repressive husband	Tumawid	Lines 6-7 Lines 17-19 Lines 20 Lines 24-26 Lines 33-34 Lines 36-39	Masculinity is measured by procreation and lineage continuity.
Lumnay	Submissive wife	Customary divorce due to childlessness	Line 27 Lines 41-42 Lines 111-115 Lines 188-191	A woman's role is measured by her reproductive ability.
Madulimay	Subservient placeholder	Customary marriage	Lines 60-64	Women are seen as an instrument to replace what was seen as broken.

the things she did for him. Beauvoir's (1956) famous line which stipulated that a woman is not born, but becomes a woman through social conditioning, is exhibited in Lumnay's submission and desperation. Additionally, in lines 188 to 199, Lumnay began to question their customs. Nonetheless, in the end, she gave up fighting their culture. When Lumnay experienced customary divorce due to childlessness, it became apparent in the story that women's role is measured by her reproductive ability.

The third character in the story is Madulimay. She entered the picture as a subservient placeholder of Lumnay. Awiyo married her to continue his lineage and fulfill preexisting gender roles. Marriage becomes an obligation when it is established to preserve the clan's legacy (Prill-Brett et al., 2016). Meanwhile, in lines 60-64, Madulimay's melancholic reality as a woman is shown. In conformity with Beauvoir's gender theory (1956), Madulimay was relegated to the position of other because her situation offered her limited possibilities. Hence, in accordance with Butler's gender performativity theory, she performed what her gender demanded.

All in all, the character analysis of Amador Daguio's *The Wedding Dance* reveals the influence of culture and gender constructs, specifically on women. It illustrates how masculinity is measured by procreation and lineage continuity, a woman's role is measured by her reproductive ability, and women are seen as an instrument to replace what was seen as broken.

C. Imagery Analysis

The table below presents an analysis of the imagery found in selected lines from Amador T. Daguio's *The Wedding Dance*. Guided by Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956) and Adrienne Rich's Cultural Feminism (1976), the study shows how the narrative's imagery continually foregrounds indigenous practices while revealing underlying gender constructs.

The auditory imagery of the gangsas in *The Wedding Dance* symbolizes the Sound of Tradition and the cultural expectations imposed on Lumnay. Though the gongs celebrate marriage and fertility, their sound becomes intrusive and oppressive to her, emphasizing her exclusion and the belief that childlessness justifies divorce in Cordilleran society (Prill-Brett et al., 2016). They shift from symbols of unity to reminders of loss, embodying the cultural force that suppresses her grief (Muyco, 2016).

In *The Wedding Dance*, the dissolution of Awiyo and

Lumnay's marriage and his remarriage to Madulimay can be understood through the Bodong peace-pact system, which prioritizes harmony and communal balance (Vecaldo et al., 2015). Infertility becomes a communal issue that elders must resolve to maintain peace, making Awiyo's remarriage a culturally sanctioned act meant to preserve lineage and social equilibrium (Prill-Brett et al., 2016).

Using Simone de Beauvoir's Gender Theory (1956), the gangsa symbolizes masculine authority, reinforcing a culture where Awiyo's remarriage is justified for the sake of lineage. Lumnay, by contrast, remains unheard, embodying the silent struggle and marginalization of women in a patriarchal society. Adrienne Rich's Cultural (1976) further highlights how Lumnay's worth is dismissed in a culture that measures a woman's value largely through fertility and lineage.

The visual imagery of fire, sparks, smoke, and shadows represents the Light of Tradition. A force that guides the community yet restricts individual freedom (Basatan, 2020). Tradition thus becomes a paradox: it illuminates society while casting darkness on those who cannot meet its demands (Caison et al., 1997).

In Cordilleran traditions, fire is central in Atang, ritual offerings to ancestral or nature spirits for guidance or protection (Fiar-od, 2021). Unlike typical Atang seeking blessings, Lumnay's offering is forced by a culture that values fertility over personal bonds.

Women are historically constructed as The Other, valued for domestic duties and reproduction rather than individuality (Beauvoir, 1956). This restriction shows women like Lumnay judged solely on fertility and confined to homemaking (Rich, 1976).

Tactile imagery highlights Lumnay's emotional vulnerability and the weight of tradition during her farewell to Awiyo (Muyco, 2016). This physical intimacy reveals how tradition prioritizes reproductive duty over personal desire (Basatan, 2020).

Lumnay's desperation reflects Cordilleran marriage practices emphasizing childbearing and ancestral continuity (Prill-Brett et al., 2016). This moment reveals how infertility strips women of identity and social standing (Basatan, 2020).

Cordilleran culture constructs women through patriarchal roles, invalidating those who fail to meet male-defined expectations (Beauvoir, 1956). Gender constructs enforce women's submission to tradition, requiring sacrifice (Rich, 1976).

Table 3
Imagery analysis

Imagery Category	Lines	Imagery Description	Cordilleran Cultural Traditions	Gender Constructs
Auditory Imagery	Lines 8-9 Line 53 Line 133 Line 173-174	Sound of Tradition	Bodong (Peace Pact)	Masculine Authority and a Feminine Silent Struggle
Visual Imagery	Lines 21-23 Lines 47-49 Lines 201-203 Line 203	Light of Tradition	Atang	Women's Role are limited to Homemakers
Tactile Imagery	Lines 116-118	Weight of Tradition	Customary marriage	Women's Submission to Cultural Tradition
Visual Imagery	Lines 160-162	Cultural Value of Tradition	Symbol of Beads	Woman's Worth is tied to Motherhood
Kinesthetic Imagery	Lines 195-199	Rhythm of Tradition	Tachok, a Kalinga Festival Dance	Men as leaders and Women as followers.

Visual imagery of the beads symbolizes tradition, gender roles, and the end of Lumnay and Awiyao's marriage (Yakal, 2017). Awiyao retrieves the beads, recalling treasured memories while facing loss, mirroring Lumnay's emotional unraveling (Anacin, 2015).

In Kalinga, Ifugao, and Bontoc societies, beads signify status and lineage (Yakal, 2017). With the marriage dissolved, the beads symbolize broken continuity and the emotional weight of unmet societal expectations (Basatan, 2020).

A woman's worth tied to motherhood implies that the beads become emblematic of her perceived failure within a society that measures women through fertility (Beauvoir, 1956). The beads also signify lost love and a woman's struggle against a culture valuing reproduction over individuality (Rich, 1976).

Furthermore, lines 195–199 employs kinesthetic imagery to illustrate the Rhythm of Tradition in Cordilleran culture, where movement becomes a language of communal identity. The leaping, circling, and tripping motions highlight the fluidity and harmony of traditional marriage celebrations (Muyco, 2016).

The dance described in Amador T. Daguió's *The Wedding Dance* closely resembles the traditional Kalinga festival dance Tachok, which is performed as men lead with vigorous steps while beating the gangsa, and women follow with movements that mirror each rhythmic strike through graceful, flowing gestures.

The choreography positions men as initiators and women as respondents, reducing the latter to subservient roles within the cultural narrative (Beauvoir, 1956). Women literally trail behind the men, both physically and symbolically. Therefore, the gendered movement in the dance illustrates deeply entrenched cultural constructs in which men serve as leaders while women are designated as graceful followers (Rich, 1976).

Imagery in *The Wedding Dance* reveals entrenched gender constructs: masculine authority, women's silent struggle, restricted homemaker roles, submission to tradition, value tied to motherhood, and men as leaders, reflecting Cordilleran cultural expectations.

D. Creative Writeback

Below is a free-verse poem that manifests the result of the investigation, giving a deeper touch of humanity into this study while strengthening its connection to both academic analysis and lived experience.

On Fading Gongs and Silent Chains

The night is wrapped in festivity,
as the flames danced in harmony,
to the tune of resounding gongs
and the clinking of sacred beads.

Chants echoed through the air,
a melodious offering to the gods,
that may the blissful nuptial night
grant the husband a fruitful lineage.

Prayers are laid out in the open
and the stakes are upped high,
but the weight of such invocations
is placed on the bride's womb .

In desperate pleas to Kabunyan,
or to whoever gods saw her lament,
she clasped her hands as she begged
to deliver the demands of her role.

For as dreadful as it may appear,
but the night a woman chooses sillot,
is the same night she wholly chooses
to be bound by the chains of traditions.

But no supplications could alter fate
and none could change life trajectory,
what is meant for her must find her
even if it's opposed to her entreaties.

One night she basked in wedded bliss,
the next she lurks in forlorn darkness
for no beating heart within her womb
was there to intercede for her marriage.

And so the woman accepted hers
with ineffable grief, on bended knees
while nostalgia settled into the space
once occupied by her estranged lover.

"Is that all a woman could ever be?"
She asked the radiant Cordilleran moon,
yet its only answer was an eerie silence—
"See, even the moon refuses to question."

In her sorrows, she clung to the beads
as though cradling her unnamed kids,
and with agony raging inside her heart,
she shut her eyes and let the gong fade.

The researchers contend that addressing the cycle of stereotypes and gender constructs that have historically shaped women's experiences is imperative for ultimately dismantling the chains that shackle them from being genuinely liberated.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that gender constructs are deeply embedded in Amador T. Daguió's *The Wedding Dance*, shaping the characters' experiences and societal roles. Gender constructs in the narrative show how tradition governs the outcomes of marriages in Cordilleran—and by extension, modern—society. Gender roles are formed in their society. It highlights how certain societal norms continue to perpetuate oppression among women, as reflected in the characterization and motivations of the characters. The deeply embedded gender constructs of the imagery reflect Cordilleran expectations where women's value is measured by reproductive capacity and

conformity to patriarchy. The poem is an ode to the women who endured suppression in the context of the *The Wedding Dance*, and it reflects women's hope and aspirations for a more liberated society where women are not bound by societal contentions. Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that there are gender constructs on women in indigenous society in Amador Daguio's *The Wedding Dance*.

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