Kalinaw Ipus Hu Bangi (Peace After Conflict):Morphology of Bukidnon Epic 'Agyu'

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Abstract: Structuralism postulated that the complex human experience could be simplified into smaller components. Numerous studies focused on the breakdown of the narrative into its smaller parts and hypothesized that cultural values are embedded in the text's narrative structure. Mindanao epic narratives were less explored than a significant number of Westernand Asian narratives. Therefore, the study aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge as it extracted Mindanao indigenous people's cultural values using Vladimir Propp's Narrative Structural Analysis Theory. First, the study revealed 24 morphological functions present in the epic based on Propp's morphological functions enumerated in *Morphology of theFolktale* (1968). Second, the study formulated the narrative structure of the epic based on Propp's propositions on pair, group,individual, out-of-sequence, double morphological functions; multiple interwoven, sequential villainies, and spheres of action of the dramatis personae. Third, the study presented *binary oppositions* such as evil-good, conflict-settlement, need-supplication, separation-reunion, and humiliation-recognition which collectively reveal the Mindanao indigenous people's penultimate quest for achieving peace after conflict. Furthermore, the study revealed several cultural implications on the significant roles of the *datu* (head of the community/tribe), women, marriage, and kinship in conflict mediation and negotiation.
Keywords: morphological function, narrative structure, cultural values

INTRODUCTION

Folklore and oral narration expressed in vernacular expressions exemplify culture and rituals. Folklore,in its narration, contains the history and tradition of the illiterate (Klein, 2015). Likewise, studies reveal that narrative texts mirror culture (Montag, 1992; Zhao, 2003; Aguirre, 2002; Chamalah et al.,2019) and describe the cognition and world of view of indigenous people (Dacillo, 2021). However, numerous studies have just been confined to Western and Asian narratives and not much of Philippine folklore had been ventured into, specifically Mindanao epic narratives. Therefore, this study aimed to contribute to a larger body of knowledge as well as demonstrate the culturally rich indigenous narratives through Vladimir Propp's Narrative Structural Analysis Theory. Specifically, the study illustrated the Bukidnon epic *Agyu*'s morphological functions, formulated its narrative structure, and analyzed the cultural values presented as *binary oppositions* and revealed the indigenouspeople's penultimate quest for peace and conflict resolution.

METHOD

The nature of the study is descriptive and qualitative, which utilized the Narrative Structural Analysis Theory of Vladmir Propp (1968). It analyzed two songs out of the five existing accounts of the Bukidnon epic about the adventures of the hero *Agyu* and his family published in "Philippine Folk Literature: The Epics" (Volume VIII), edited by Damiana L. Eugenio (2001). The qualitative analyses of the morphological functions and patterns through the periodic and isolated functions of the texts give way to a descriptive interpretation of the cultural values embedded. The study of the morphological patterns is naturalistic (uncontrolled) and observational (non-experimental).

The morphological functions and narrative structure of the epic were identified and formulated using Propp's propositions on pair, group, and individual functions, task differentiation, multiple interwoven sequential villainy/lack, double morphological functions, out-of-sequence functions, and spheres of the dramatis personae. The narrative structure inadvertently revealed cultural values presented as *binary oppositions*.

FINDINGS

Morphological Functions

There are 24 morphological functions found in the Bukidnon epic *Agyu.* These are the functions reconnaissance [ε], delivery [ζ], trickery [η], complicity [Θ], villainy/lack [A/a], mediation [B], counteraction [C], departure [↑], donor [D], provision [F], guidance [G], struggle [H], victory [I], liquidation of lack [K], return
[↓], pursuit [Pr], rescue [Rs], unrecognized arrival [o], difficult task [M], solution (to difficult task) [N], recognition [Q], transformation [T], punishment [U], and wedding [W]; excluding the functions Branding [J] andUnfounded Claims [L]. Accordingly, the presence or absence of the functions is a product of the cultural values of the place and time the narration belongs (Chamalah, et al., 2019). The functions' order of occurrence are illustrated in Figure 1.

[ε ζ η Θ A/a B C ↑ D F G H I K ↓ Pr Rs o M N Q T U W]

Figure 1. Morphological Functions of Bukidnon Epic '*Agyu'*

Narrative Structure of Bukidnon Epic *Agyu*

The narrative structures [A-W], [a-K], [εζηΘ], [εζηΘABC↑], [H-I], [Pr-Rs], [M-N], [o-Q]; and the individual functions [D] and [F] reveal cultural values of the indigenous people reflected in the epic and are interpreted as binary oppositions such as *concept of evil and good*; *separation and reunion, need and supplication*; *humiliation and recognition*; *practices on conflict and dispute settlement*. These binary oppositions are innate human concepts embedded in the narrative structure (Gong, 2020).

Cultural Values Exemplified in Bukidnon Epic AgyuEvil and Good

The narrative structure *villainy-wedding* [A-W] and its sub-function *lack-liquidation of lack* [a-K] reflect the beliefs of the indigenous people regarding good and evil. The villainy [A] that the hero experiences prompts the quest which leads to *wedding* [W]. W*edding* [W] may be in the form of peace. Likewise, the need for vengeance (or lack of restitution) ends always with the *liquidation of lack* [K] (vengeance or restitution is achieved). This narrative structure aligns with the Bukidnon concept of good and evil shown in Figure 2.

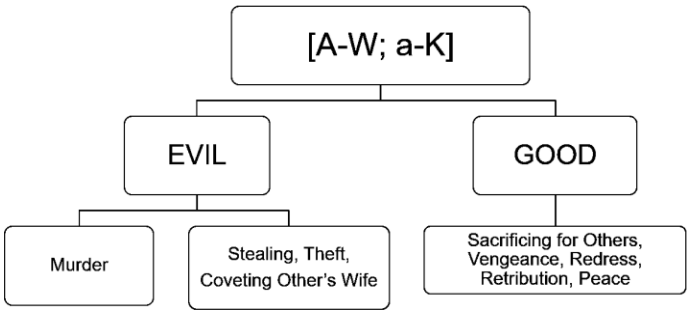


Figure 2. Concept of Evil & Good in *villainy-wedding* [A-W] & *lack-liquidation of lack* [a-K] Narrative Structure

The *Bukidnon* tribe has a clear concept of what is evil and good. Murder, stealing, and coveting other's wife are considered forms of villainy and are therefore evil. The *villainy* [A] (i.e., murder) and the quest ('sacrificing for others') to *wedding* [W] (i.e., social justice) are binary oppositions that represent the tribe's concept of evil and good. However, *lack* [a] (i.e., a desire for vengeance) is considered less evil and its *liquidation of lack*
[K] (i.e., vengeance) is good.

Group function *villainy-mediation-counteraction-departure* [ABC↑] and sub-function *lack* [aBC↑] showthat any form of villainy or want requires solution and gratification respectively. Such a product will only be achieved through a decision to do something leading to the quest. The quests are corrective measures, and in theprocess, result in redress to villainy and satisfaction of lack. These actions are considered good.

The hero's journey to *wedding* [W] or *liquidation* [K] are acts of "sacrificing for others" therefore good (Arcilla, Arcilla, & Cabana, 2019). Moreover, 'killing for revenge' is viewed as almost not evil at all since vengeance is perceived as a 'community obligation' and believed to result in a 'counterbalance for the loss' (Ragandang, 2018).

Moreover, the narrative structure *reconnaissance-delivery-trickery-complicity* [εζηΘ] is fulfilled through asking questions, receiving answers, and cunning use of the knowledge and information obtained. The deeds areneither good nor bad. However, it becomes evil when used to cause harm to others fulfilling *villainy* [A]. In contrast, it is seen as good when it is used to protect and preserve the family, exemplified by the inverted form of [εζηΘ]. Figure 3 illustrates the narrative structure [εζηΘ] and its inverted form; both of which depicting the existence of good and evil.

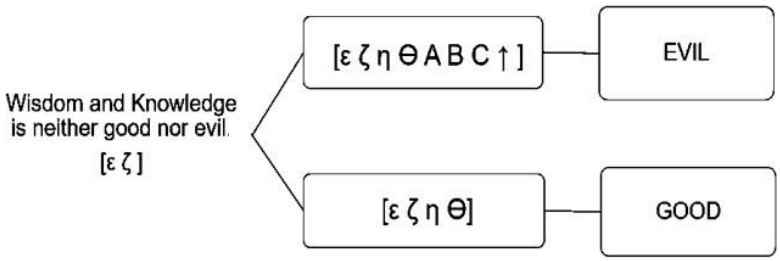


Figure 3. Concept of Evil & Good in [εζ], [εζηΘ], and [εζηΘABC↑]

Good deeds are done to preserve and protect the family as suggested by the inverted [εζηΘ] with the omission of group functions *villainy-mediation-counteraction-departure* [ABC↑]. In contrast, evil deeds threaten the family's well-being fulfilled by the group functions *reconnaissance-delivery-trickery-complicity* followed by *villainy-mediation-counteraction-departure* [εζηΘABC↑].

Need and Supplication

The narrative structure *reconnaissance-delivery-trickery-complicity* [εζηΘ], *villainy-wedding* [A-W] and sub-function *lack-liquidation of lack* [a-K], *struggle-victory* [H-I], *pursuit-rescue* [Pr-Rs], *difficult task-solution* [M-N], and individual functions *provision* [F] and *guidance* [G] are mediated and dependent to the functions of the donor [D]. The *donor* [D] function refers to the roles of spirits (*diwata, bantay)* as magical agents or objects who are either good or bad. *Provision of magical objects* [F] are caused, influenced, and allowed by spirits.

The indigenous ritual of *betel nut* chewing is characterized as the medium for persuading the *diwata* to guard, protect, and provide for the hero (Rooney, 1995 & Valdes, 2004). Likewise, the villain also sways the same in order for him to cause harm and fraud. The revival and restoration of strength to the weak and life to thedead are manifestations of the relevance of the betel nut in restoring health, strength, courage, and life.

The narrative structure *pursuit-rescue* [Pr-Rs] reveals the dichotomy in need of supplication and rescue. A family member (i.e. spouse) can be a source of help. Moreover, when a hero is in need, he can also call on his*diwata*. Table 1 enumerates supplication made by the donors and helpers in response to the need of the characters.

Table 1. Need & Supplication in the Narrative Structure: *func. of the donor* [D], *provision* [F], *guidance/transference* [G]

Narrative Structure	Magical Agent/Object	Role of a Magical Agent
[ε ζ η Θ]	diwata	Transformation to a crocodile (disguise)
[εζηΘABC↑]	diwata	Transformation to a snake (villainy)
[G]	Wind, magical sulinday,magical baklaw	as a guide, mode of transportation (as transference fromone place to the next)
[A-W]; [a-K]	Talabusaw	Protection from murder, stealing
[H-I]; [M-N]	Betel chew	A symbol in a marriage rite, for relaxation, inducing sleep, poison, restoring health, strength, life, and peace.
[Pr-Rs]	Diwata, talabusaw (amulet);	Rescue, protection, rescue

Conflict and Settlement

It is the *datu*'s responsibility as the tribe's chieftain to settle conflicts and disputes since he has the knowledge, ability, and wisdom to mediate and settle conflicts in order to avoid physical violence (Improgo, 2012). Table 2 presents a summary of the roots of conflict/dispute and the forms of conflict settlement (Ragandang, 2017). Conflict and settlement as binary oppositions are revealed by the narrative structures *villainy-wedding* [A-W], *struggle-victory* [H-I], and *difficult task-solution* [M-N].

Table 2. Conflict & Settlement in [A-W], [H-I], [M-N] Narrative Structure

Narrative Structure	Roots of Conflict [A], [H] , [M], [a]	Means of Settlement[W, I, N, K]
[A-W] *Villainy-Wedding*	Abduction	Right of Kinship
[H-I] *Struggle-Victory*	Murder	Right of Revenge
[M-N] *Difficult Task - Solution*	Theft	Forced Marriage
[a-K] *Lack-Liquidation of Lack*	Marital conflict	Negotiation
	Clan War	Retribution
	Lack of Justice	Restitution

Villainy-wedding [A-W] is the journey of the *datu* as *hero* seeking truth and providing justice for the family and *punishment* [U] for the evildoer or perpetrators in order to bring back peace [W]. *Villainy* [A] such as theft or stealing properties, abduction or murder of a family member, and wife-stealing are causes of conflict in the epic. The villainous acts are subject to the justice system of the *Bukidnon* tribe. *Difficult task-solution* [M-N]is fulfilled as the *datus* proposed resolutions on the table. Social justice is invoked as *solution* to settle disputes (i.e., theft of property and abduction of the wife). Moreover, *difficult task-solution* [M-N] and the fulfilment of functions *transfiguration* [T] and *punishment* [U] show the importance of mediation and reconciliation in order to end wars and bring about peace (Demetrio, 1986).

The narrative structure *struggle-victory* [H-I] is fulfilled as Pigsayo struggled against forced marriage tohis enemy. However, the function *victory* [I] was fulfilled when the conflict was settled. Though *Pigsayo* was forced to marry *Imbununga* (the villain), she was able to seize the *taklubu* (magical object). Moreover, the *Pigsayo-Imbununga* marriage became a means to resolve the conflict caused by theft of the *taklubu* and the missing wife. However, a more severe form of conflict resolution is depicted in the battle between *Minayun* andthe villain. The villain refused to settle the theft and abduction through nonviolence, instead made pursuit of the hero. Because the conflict was not settled peacefully, violence was not avoided. The physical violence resulted to wounded children and numerous deaths.

A force marriage between two rivaling families can be a form of settlement since it "ensure[s] a strong and lasting good relationship between rivaling families." A "settlement of disputes" is initiated by the *datu* who is in-charge of keeping peace and identifying the root cause of the conflicts. The root cause of conflicts in the epic is theft, stealing, and abduction of family members. Such evil deeds are resolved in peaceful means. Reconciliation is necessary to preserve the ties and keep it from being broken. Marriage which joins kinsmen byblood makes the settlement easier and punishment less severe. Unconsent to the peace arrangement proposed bythe *datu* leads to the involvement of other family members which leads to severe damages caused by *rido* or clanfeuds which may continue to cause more harm even death (Ragandang, 2018).

Separation and Reunion

Lack-liquidation of lack [a-K], a sub-function of *villainy* [A], depicts the value of affinity. *Lack* [a] is portrayed in the repetitive verses "*…My purpose is to meet my parent who is chief. My intention is to see my father who is headman…*". The hero's journey because of such *lack* [a] has led to its *liquidation* [K] in a father- child and mother-child reunions.

Bringing back his father and the presence of his father as the *datu* is an expression of bringing the familyand community together (Revel, 2001). Moreover, the quest to search for the father parallels the tribe's concept of good as 'sacrificing for others' (Arcilla, Arcilla, & Cabana, 2019). Such values are depicted as *Minayun* broughthis father from death to life. Similarly, *Agyu* fulfilled his responsibility as a head and *datu* when he dispatched *Tomulin* to look for his sister *Pigsayo. Imbununga* did so by going to battle to retrieve his wife and restore the missing *taklubu*. Table 3 summarizes these cultural values exemplified in the narrative structure.

Table 3. Separation & Reunion in the Narrative Structure [a-K] & [↓]

Narrative Structure [a-K] and [↓]	Cultural Values
The desire to meet a father leads to a quest	significance of the father to the family
The desire of the husband to reunite with his wife.	importance of marital relationship
The desire of the brother (*datu*) to keep the family/tribemembers safe	role of the *datu* to the community or tribe
The desire to bring back the *taklubu; war ornaments*	importance of family heirloom

Humiliation and Recognition

Humiliation is a form of punishment for the villain. In conflicts and settlements, the villain who caused harm through theft and murder was said to have been humiliated. Based on the concept of humiliation and recognition as revealed by the structure *unrecognized arrival-recognition* [o-Q], it is better to resolve the conflict with nonviolence. The involvement of children in the fight is a reality of the violence brought about by clan wars that last for a long time until every clan member has been extinguished. The misplaced *liquidation of lack* [K] inthe place of *wedding* [W] illustrates successful revenge for the victimized father. However, the reference of the epic to 'silence' after a long time of battle is viewed to be an annihilation of a clan. True to some Philippine indigenous tribes, a clan may celebrate one *rido* but as a consequence, kindles another three more (Macabuac- Ferolin & Constantino, 2014).

The forced marriage of *Pigsayo* (hero/princess) and *Imbununga* (villain) is precedence to peace betweentwo rival sides. Recognition of an enemy is represented in the epic as acceptance of an enemy as he becomes a family member through marriage by right of the kinship system (Ragandang, 2013 & Gallego, 2015). Recognitionis given to an enemy who had shown great prowess and skill in the battle and likewise, a recognition of one's weakness and limitation. *Agyu* realizes that *Imbununga* is a mighty rival, and his strength is incomparable even to *Agyu*, who is powerful that "no enemy has cried out victory over Yandang had lived (Demetrio, 1986)".

The father's recognition of his son is depicted as *Agyu* acknowledges *Minayun* in the lines: "He is my son whom I hid from you. He is my son whom I kept from you (Eugenio, 2001)." It is the responsibility of the man to acknowledge his child for kinship is highly esteemed even by one's enemy and more so with one's blood. Failure to recognize kinship could be a cause of conflict (Ragandang, 2018). Table 4 shows the narrative structure *Unrecognized Arrival-Recognition* [o-Q]. The functions [o-Q] were fulfilled by the hero (also by elders such as father of the hero) and the villain.

Table 4. Humiliation & Recognition [o-Q] Narrative Structure

Narrative Structure [o-Q]	Forms/Actions
Humiliation [o]	▪ Humiliation (also as a form of punishment) ▪ Annihilation of a clan brought by clan wars (*rido* or *pangayaw*)
Recognition [Q]	▪ of kinship by blood (father-son) or by marriage (in-laws) ▪ of the enemy's prowess and strength in battle ▪ of one's weakness and limitation

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study revealed that the morphology of the Bukidnon epic *Agyu* is congruent with Propp's propositions even with the misplaced *liquidation of lack* [K] in place of the function [W]. The morphological functions are constituents of the narrative structure and make up the Morphology of Bukidnon epic *Agyu.*

First, the study revealed 24 morphological functions: *reconnaissance* [ε], *delivery* [ζ], *trickery* [η], *complicity* [Θ], *villainy/lack* [A/a], *mediation* [B], *counteraction* [C], *departure* [↑], *donor* [D], *provision* [F], *guidance* [G], *struggle* [H], *victory* [I], *liquidation of lack* [K], *return* [↓], *pursuit* [Pr], *rescue* [Rs], *unrecognized arrival* [o], *difficult task* [M], *solution (to difficult task)* [N], *recognition* [Q], *transformation* [T], *punishment* [U], *and wedding* [W].

Second, using Propp's method, the study revealed the narrative structure of the Bukidnon epic *Agyu* distributed according to and among seven pairs: *villainy-wedding* [A-W], *lack-liquidation of lack* [a-K], *reconnaissance-delivery* [ε– ζ], *struggle-victory* [H-I], *difficult task-solution* [M-N], *pursuit-rescue* [Pr-Rs], and *unrecognized arrival-recognition* [o-Q]; 4 group functions *villaint-mediation-counteraction-departure* [ABC↑], sub-function *lack-mediation-counteration-departure* [aBC↑], *reconnaissance-delivery-trickery-complicity* [εζηΘ] and [εζηΘABC↑], 3 task differentiation in terms of mediation [B] and function of the donor [D], and difficult task [M] leading to marriage, multiple interwoven and sequential villainy developing to 2 quest types [A-W] and [a-K]; double morphological functions distributed across moves, four individual functions as *of the donor* [D], *provision of the magical agent* [F], *guidance* [G], *departure* [↓], 1 out of sequence-function *liquidation of lack* [K], and six spheres of action of the *hero, villain, dispatcher, princess, donor, and helper*.

Third, the narrative structure of the Bukidnon epic *Agyu* exemplified cultural values of peace as the penultimate goal after conflict presented in the binary oppositions such as concept of evil and good, need and supplication, conflict and settlement, separation and reunion, and humiliation and recognition. The structure revealed the villain's involvement to evil, desire or need, conflict, separation, and humiliation, while the hero's quest is associated with good, supplication, settlement, reunion, and recognition.

The study also perceived several implications revealed by the narrative structure. First, peace is a crucialby-product of the satisfaction of man's needs. Thus, the achievement and preservation of peace are of extreme necessity for the indigenous tribes. This also means that social order is as important as the basic human needs for food, shelter or territory, self-transcendence, acceptance, recognition, opportunity, and freedom. Hence, the struggle for social order is not just a personal pursuit but a responsibility of the community. Second, the *datu* is responsible for seeking justice and intervention in social disorder. Third, communication during negotiation and mediation is important in settling conflicts

and disputes peacefully and preventing the cycle of clan wars. Fourth, unity through the right of kinship strengthens conflict resolution. Thus, the role of women in marriage is crucial in attaining and maintaining peace within and among tribes.

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