

Images and Gender Role Development of Filipino Women on Selected Short Stories

Susan D. Tiangson, MAEd.

Pangasinan State University - Lingayen Campus, Lingayen , Pangasinan, Philippines

Abstract

The study focused on the different images depicted by Filipino women in selected short stories as well as the influence of these images to gender role development. The five images are the willing victim, the dutiful wife, the furious and resentful daughter, the protective mother and the selfless mother. The gender role developments on women embodied in the selected stories are the career woman, the vigilant mother, and the single mother. Women who are single parents, empowered women, and warriors and accomplished women are confirmations of gender role developments evident in the present society. The researcher concludes that many women in contemporary society exemplify gender role development. The single parent performing the dual role of a mother and a father, the empowered women who are leaders and warriors of the nation and the accomplished women who are professionals in their chosen careers. The gender role developments show the evolution of women as they raise themselves from the traditional world the patriarchal society has cloaked them. It is recommended that Students shall read other stories to discover other images and gender role developments of Filipino Women. Women should take advantage of the opportunities to obtain higher education and appreciation of Filipino contemporary short stories should be more enriched for a better understanding of the images and the gender role development of Filipino Women.

Keywords: Gender Role development, Images, Short Stories

Introduction

People exist in this world with the unwavering fact that men and women are created equal. This fact is in the surface of humanity substantiating the essence of all people in the same pedestal of roles and duties. Mahatma Gandhi says that "All children of one and the same God and therefore absolutely equal". It is God's supremacy which tells people that regardless of sex and social status, all are the same beings and have the same degree of importance. However, she mentioned that woman is not the weaker sex, but the better of humanity; the nobler of the two for she is the embodiment of sacrifice, humility, faith and knowledge.

Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up business; enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions (Brabeck, 2001).

Women, since the beginning of time, have been deemed feeble, vulnerable, and reliant on men for survival. History generally illustrates women as weak, docile, pure, reserved, caring, and nurturing and led to the kitchen. Her main concern and domain is the home; everything the woman does should be for the happiness and unity of the family.

According to Raymundo (2000), in the Philippines, many government institutions have undertaken initiative guarantee of equal work opportunities to men and women, provide equal pay for equal work, enforce labor laws for woman legislation which calls for equal job opportunities and prohibits gender discrimination at work. It can't be denied that Filipino women are more active and have participatory roles in the development process (In compliance with R.A. 7192).

Along this vein, giving distinction between gender equity roles are perceived that women are passive, emotionally dependent, demonstrative, loving, patient, self-sacrificing, peacemakers, and have wholesome relationship specially within the family.

This paper focused on the analysis of the images of Filipino women as revealed in the selected short stories. It also aimed to identify the gender role development of women as reflected in the chosen short stories as well as the gender role development mirrored in modern Philippine society.

The researcher has conceived the idea of identifying and analyzing the images of Filipino women as revealed in the selected short stories. She also envisioned to identify the gender role development of Filipino women as reflected in the chosen short stories as well as the gender role development mirrored in modern Philippine society.

Materials and Methods

The study focused on the images and gender role development of Filipino women as projected through the selected short stories, thus the descriptive method was used. The study used literary criticism through content analysis, a set of systematic and objective procedures for a qualitative study. This is deemed necessary as it is the objective of this study to describe prevailing conditions which are relative to the identification and discussion of images, roles and behaviors portrayed by women in relation to gender role development. By analyzing the selected short stories, the researcher answered the questions posited in the previous chapter on the different images and gender development role, portrayals of Filipino Women and gender role development in the modern society. Content analysis, a part of formalistic approach was employed to determine if the female characters are stereotyped by gender. In this type of analysis, the researcher used literary analysis, an approach done by looking at how meaning is constructed into literary material in the same way deconstructing the same material taking it apart to see how it works and how it came to be (Buston, 1997). To facilitate the research, the following literary forms, approaches and literary elements was employed, such as narration, description, psychological, sociological, and feminist approaches, and characterization, dialogue, setting and theme. The data for this study was generated from the short stories depicting different behaviors, actions, images and roles of Filipino women in relation to gender development. The selected short stories of Estrella Alfon, a PALANCA LITERARY awardee as the focus of literary analyses are: *Servant Girl*, *Mill of Gods*, *Magnificence* and *Compostela*.

Results and Discussion

Images of Filipino Women in Selected Short Stories

The women characters in Alfon's stories typify the Filipina image as she performs her various roles that the society has imposed on her. The images of women the **willing victim** and the **insensitive** and **inhuman** mistress mirrored in the story "**The Servant Girl**"; the **dutiful** wife and the **furious** and **resentful** daughter in "**Mill of the Gods**"; the **protective mother** in "**Magnificence**", and the **selfless mother** in the story "**Compostela**".

The images of the Filipino Women in the selected short stories were narrated and described to reveal their picturesque personality as they perform their corresponding role in the story.

In the story, "**The Servant Girl**", Rosa, the servant who is the leading character manifested the image of a willing victim; the secondary character portrayed the image of an **insensitive** and **inhuman** mistress.

According to De Guzman (1995), a victim is a woman who may either be a victim of circumstances or a willing victim. A victim of circumstances recognizes that her decision is not the best for her but she merely endures it as it is. A **willing victim** knows the risk of her choice but she still chooses this. This means that a willing victim is someone who allows others to treat her as a doormat. She does not know how to say no, even it does damage to her self-esteem, health and well being. The willing victim allows others to malign and maltreat her. Consequently, she knows the consequences of her decisions but regardless of this understanding, she still takes the risk.

Rosa in the "**Servant Girl**" is a pathetic figure because she is maltreated and abused by her mistress or lady employer.

"Her mistress' voice comes to her, calling her impatiently, and she tried to hurry. When she arrived, the woman asked her what had kept her so long, and without waiting for an answer she ranted on, saying she had heard the women jokes in the bathhouse, and she know what had kept the girl so long. Her anger mounting with every angry word she said, she finally swung out on arm before she quite knows what she was doing when she slapped Rosa's face". (Alfon, 1960:81)

Silently, Rosa bears her mistress spell of nasty words. She lived a wretched life as a servant frequently battered and nagged by an alcoholic mistress. Though she thinks of rebellion against the treatments, she receives from her mistress, she basically accepts it as a part of scheme of things. She is passive, docile and frail. She suffers a weakness of will and reason,

struggling against a fate that is cruel to her. Rosa, as a character, does not do anything to elevate the position or change her condition. She just has taken her mistress verbal and physical abuses as they are.

Rosa, in "The Servant Girl", is portrayed as a willing victim. She does not complain but rather only weeps in the whole stay. She is hoping for her blind infatuation to save her from doom. Rosa's mind and heart are shaded by Angel's image and thus, mired the truth of reality.

While the lady employer of Rosa has shown an image being insensitive and inhuman to her servant, Rosa. The mistress was pictured to be tactless, cruel, cold, pitiless, unkind, indifferent, and unfriendly to Rosa. The mistress oftentimes maltreats Rosa physically, socially and emotional

In the story "**The Mill of the Gods**", Engracia embodied the image of a dutiful wife, while Martha, who at the beginning of the story, emerged as reflecting an image of a furious and resentful daughter.

She is the epitome of a dutiful wife who renounces pains in the name of love. She is sheltered and cultured at home and conforms to the rules of her husband. The dutiful wife must oblige herself with the duties expected of her to carry out in the family and does not complain. Engracia is in sorrow and anger. She has unfaithful husband.

The story opens with an intensive fight between wife and husband...

"Her arms were pinioned to her sides by her husband but her wild eyes, the frenzy with which she stamped her feet, and kicked him in the shins, and tried to bite him with her teeth, these were more terrible than the giant of what shinning blade."

The scenario reveals Engracias' fury toward her husband's unfaithfulness. However, in the midst of depression, while mellowing in sorrow and grief, she justifies her husband's actions by making excuses and reasons why her husband did such thing.

At the age of 12, Martha is traumatized to witness a violent quarrel between her parents.

"Martha cried with her, and caressed her mother's back with her hands, but she had no words to offer, nothing to say. When her mother at last was able to talk again, she told Martha to go back to bed. But it wasn't the child that entered who went out of that room. And yet terror of that night was not so great because it was only a terror half-understood."

She was a woman now. Martha was wise and wary. But there is no wisdom. No wariness against love. Not the kind of deep love she knew she bore him. And even as she loved him, she found within herself the old deep-abiding secret hate. Against her father. Against the laws of man and the church. Against the very fates that seem to rejoice in making her pay for a sin she had not committed. She now learned of bitterness."

De Guzman (1995) claims that the angry woman feels short change of anything given to her bitterness and resentment is a result of repressed feeling as a martyr and a victim and so she becomes a negative aspect of her character. Accordingly, the furious daughter deems cheated and unfairly treated. She feels that she is given something she does not deserve. Her resentment is a result of repressed feelings as a martyr and she becomes the reserve persona of herself through bitterness and anger.

Martha loathes and curses her father for his infidelity that has brought her to ill fate. Ironically, she carries on an illicit affair with a man despite the knowledge that he is no longer free. This is her way of rebelling against her father's loose morals, as well as her mother's apathy.

Martha is **furious** and **resentful** because fates are against her. She believes that her misfortune in love is caused by the fates.

In the story **Magnificence**, the mother portrayed an image of being protective all throughout in order to enable her daughter to remain safe, clean and pure.

The story "**Magnificence**" opens with a man named Vicente visiting the house of the two children to teach them with their lessons and home works.

The mother allowed Vicente to help her children in their homework. She did not doubt the man's intentions because he had all the praises for the two children. Trust was easily given to Vicente because the mother was deceived by his sweet talk. The mother did not foresee that her daughter will have an unpleasant experience with Vicente.

"In those days, the rage was for pencils... Add to the man's gentleness and his kindness in knowing a child's desires, his promise that he would give each of them not one pencil but two. And for the little girl who he said was very bright and deserved more, he would get the biggest pencil he could find."

Man's ultimate desire for material things often clouds his judgment. Thus, to lure children into a trap, the best way is to bribe them. Children are the easiest prey because they are helpless, innocent and trusting. Vicente uses the pencils as gifts to the children to get their approval and their **trust**. Two weeks later after his visit to the children, he brought along with him the pencils he promised. The next evening, he was earlier than the usual time he normally goes there to teach the children. He asked the boy to get a glass of water for him. Vicente was left alone with the girl and asked the little girl to sit on his lap.

"Vicente took the girl up lightly in his arms, holding her armpits, and he held her to sit down on his lap... She looked around at Vicente, interrupting her careful writing to twist around. The girl kept squirming, for somehow she felt uncomfortable to be held thus, her mother and father. His face was all in sweat, and his eyes looked very strange, and he indicated to her that she must turn around, attend to the homework she was writing. But the little girl felt very queer, she didn't know why, all of a sudden, she was immensely frightened, and she jumped up away from Vicente's lap. She stood looking at him, feeling that queer frightened feeling, not knowing what to do."

The extent of the man's perverted intention in the story is not made explicit; but the allusions of malicious tendencies are sufficient proof.

The girl got frightened and got away from Vicente. The little girl becomes suddenly uncomfortable and afraid. As she got away, the mother came and saw what was about to happen. The mother must have felt her daughter looked scared.

"The mother went to the covering man, and marched him with a glance out of the circle of light that held the little boy. Once in the shadow, she extended her hand, and without any opposition, took away the papers that Vicente was holding to himself. She stood there saying nothing as the man fumbled with his hands and with his fingers, and she waited until he had finished... She bode Vicente go up the stairs... Up the stairs, went the man and the mother followed behind. The mother turned on Vicente. There was a pause. Finally, the woman raised her hand and slapped him full hands in the face. He retreated down one tread of the stairs with the force of the blow, but the mother followed him. With her other hand, she slapped him on the other side of the face again. And so down the stairs they went, the man backwards, his face continually open to the force of the woman's slapping... The mother thus shut his mouth, and with those hard forceful slaps, she escorted him right to the other door."

After telling the children to go to their room, she kept on slapping Vicente until he was brought to the other door and he ran away to the shadows. The mother asked to girl to take a bath before she went to bed. The mother also asked her daughter to burn the pencils Vicente gave."

"Magnificence" is a delicately woven story which provides admirable insights about the dominance of the mother-daughter relationship. It is a narrative that presents remarkable view about the power of the mother who protects her daughter and the emotional intimidation of women and children.

The typical woman transcends into a fierce warrior in defense of a vulnerable and innocent child. The mother immediately becomes alert and cautious to save her daughter from the wicked intentions of the man. The mother's magnificent act is the brightness that eats away the shadow which hides the pedophile's malevolent intentions.

The protective mother, no doubt, enables her child to remain safe. She is able to protect, love and nurture like no one else can. A mother's love, concern, protection and presence are matchless.

The story of **Compostela** embodied the image of a selfless mother who has sacrificed her life in favor of the needs and comfort of her children.

The four selected stories of which were subjected for literary analysis through the different literary approaches such as psychological, sociological and feminists demonstrate an awareness of, and a deep interest in the power of a woman.

Psychological approach is used to facilitate understanding of the inner and outer lives of the female main character as they interact with each other and as revealed in their words and actions. Sociological approach is used to reflect the roles of Filipino Women in the selected short stories in terms of its connection to social, political and economic forces, and Feminism approach is used to examine women's contribution to social life and the nature of the structures and process that maintain gender inequality (Littell, 1989). These approaches were used intertwined and holistic manner to describe the gender development of Filipino women as reflected on the selected short stories.

Only three of the analyzed stories such as **Mill of the Gods**, **Magnificence**, and **Compostela**, revealed some woman characters which displayed vigilance, independence, and courage to fight for their rights, assert their freedom, participate and contribute actively to societal development and progress.

The above-mentioned stories embodied gender role development of Filipino woman, in contrast to images of the woman as a willing victim (The Servant Girl) and the dutiful wife (Mill of the Gods).

Among them are: the career woman (Mill of the Gods) who actively and assertively participates in the corporate world; the vigilant woman (Magnificence) who is aware and conscious of her rights and privileges; and the single parent (Compostela) who single handedly raises, rears and guides her child.

In the story, Martha personifies the independent career woman. Although she was described as a dull, simple and uninteresting girl in the opening of the story, there were event circumstances that happened in her life that led to the development of her character,

"And Martha made up her earlier lack of luster by shining in her class now. She was eighteen and nor through high school yet, but she made for it by graduating with honors. Espeleta clapped its hands when she graduated, gave her flowers. Her father and mother were there, too. And they were proud. And to look at Martha, you would think she was proud too, if a little too shy still."

With Martha who's first love turns out tragic and regrettable, she paid attention to her studies and made up for inadequacy. Although she was a bit older when she graduated in high school, she finished with honors.

There was a transition in Martha's character. Because of her tragic and awful experiences, her attitudes, values and outlook in life changed.

"Martha studied nursing, and started having visitors in her mother's house again. Doctors this time, older men, to whom her gravity of manner appealed and the innate good sense that seemed so patient in her quiet demeanor. Espelita was now rather proud of Martha. She seemed everything a girl should be, and they cited her as an example of what religion could do. Lift you out of the shadow of your inheritance. For look at Martha, see how different she is from what should be her father's daughter."

De Guzman (1995) posits that in the process of bitterness and anger, women realize that they drained psychologically. They begin to assert their rights. Martha's bitter experiences influenced and motivated her to excel and stand out in her academics. This way, she has proven her self-worth and raised her self-confidence and self-esteem.

Martha is a single career woman. She is a professional. She was with the physician at the operating room, attending to her father.

"Anyhow, one day at the hospital, Martha was attendant nurse at an emergency case. A man had been shot. There were three bullets through his chest, but he was still alive. Martha laughed queerly to herself, saying I must be dreaming. I am imagining that man has my father's face. It was the doctor she loved who was in charge. With a queer dreaming feeling, she raised her eyes to meet his, and was shocked to see him drop his gaze, and over his face steal a twist as of pain, as of pity."

Martha remained compose, capable, proficient and functional during a critical period of her father. Martha did not let her feelings and emotions hinder her from doing her work at her utmost best.

Emotional, affectionate, caring, protective and yet firm and vigilant, a mother is the perennial source of inspiration. Being a mother is also about nurturing, guiding, and supporting. Often a mother demonstrates tenacity, protectiveness and resourcefulness. It becomes innate to a mother to create, nurture, empower and to defend her young.

In the story *Magnificence*, the mother who depicted an ordinary woman has transformed to a vigilant woman, rising the height of magnificent rage as she protects her daughter from a sexual pervert.

The mother was able to see Vicente's malicious intentions. She protects her daughter from the sinful purposes of Vicente. A vigilant woman is watchful and alert. She is observant with an eye to the future and is on guard for dangers or pitfalls. The mother is well-experienced in raising her children. She has become even more adept at figuring out what troubles her daughter.

A mother is able to do anything in an effort to protect or provide for her children. A mother's vigilance can turn her into an erratic and hysterical fighter with the superhero strength and ability.

"When her mother reached her, the woman held her hand out to the child. Always also, with the terrible indelibility that one associated with terror, the girl was to remember the touch of that hand on her shoulder, heavy, kneading at her flesh, the woman herself stricken almost dumb, but her eyes eloquent with that angered fire. She knelt, she felt the little girl's dress and took it off with haste and that was almost frantic, tearing at the buttons and imparting a terror to the little girl that almost made her sob. Hush, the mother said, take a bath quickly!"

The mother at the end of the story asked her daughter to take a bath and change her clothes. This act signifies the mother's desire to wipe away the unpleasant experience of her daughter.

Compostela is a story of a woman where her husband is a soldier who fights for the country's independence, while the woman is left home to take good care of their child. While the husband is away, she takes charge of the household, the decision making, and the child rearing. Despite the uncertainties, the dangers brought about by the war, the woman courageously takes the role of a mother who single handedly take charge and heads a family. As the husband is busy fighting the enemy, the woman is left at home to protect and care for her young.

"...and there again, there would come to me, wife of a husband playing soldier, the thought that all life was like a dream – a multi-phased dream, its most recurrent phenomenon, the unreal melancholy of a voice singing in a blacked-out night, singing of love in a world that should not promote love, because love endangered lives that in war could only be lost. And then the little baby would cry and I would put out a hand to quiet him and realize once more how real all this was, and war and fear."

Her attitude was almost necessary because she was solely responsible for her and son's well-being and safety. She has to provide for her child in the absence of her husband who had been called off to war. Through her actions, she has shown valiance, kindness and unconditional love for her son. In the midst of war, where people feel unsafe and anxious, where nights were spent traveling mountains and hills to evacuate and secure refuges, the mother has to be courageous to be able to surpass and endure these feats for her and her son to live mindless of all the fears and anxieties.

Estrella Alfon's short stories projected the images of the lead characters employing an indirect method of character presentation. These are languages or dialogue, setting and theme. The use of those elements explains how a writer manipulates the different elements of his craft that make her and her works different from others.

The character of Rosa, the willing victim in the story, *The Servant Girl*; Engracia, dutiful wife and Martha, the furious and resentful daughter in *Mill of the Gods*; the protective mother in *Magnificence*; and the selfless mother in *Compostela* explain and elaborate the idea of changes in language and culture base on what is happening in the society.

Dialogue is a type of characterization that explains the thought of what others say about the character. It is also a means of rendering rather than presenting the character's thoughts and responses. If the character feels pain, anger, misery, or even love, their speeches can also be exact expressions of what they feel and think or what is in their mind, in their own words.

Setting is the natural and artificial scenery or environment in which the characters live and move, together with the things they use.

The story **"Servant Girl"** took place at the mistress' house. This is where the meaningful and unpleasant experiences and incidents of Rosa happened.

The setting of the story "Mill of the Gods" is Espeleta, where the family of Martha lives. In the story, it refers to a community which functions not just as place setting but as character, too.

The story "**Magnificence**" happened at the house of the two children. The two stories started with a man named Vicente coming to the house of the two children to tutor them with their class works. The families absolutely trust him for they think that this man was always so gentle, so kind, and there was nothing to fear with when he is around.

"**Compostela**" is a small town by the sea, the hometown of the narrator's maid. Here the people lived simply, contentedly, and except for fear of the Japanese, happily too. The narrator tells of the many other jolly moods of Compostela as a musical minded village where the volunteer guards of the boys and girls chanted their jingles under the moonlight.

Theme refers to a unified scheme of content and central idea impliedly or expressly stated in the short story.

The story "**Servant Girl**" has for its theme – "A woman's dreaming caused by infatuation,"

In the story "**Mill of the Gods**", the main idea revolves on a patriarchal society where male predominates female.

Martha's philandering father was not punished for his infidelity and unfaithfulness to his wife, although his illicit affair is known to everyone. Despite his wrongdoings, he was still accepted by his wife.

The story "**Magnificence**" has for its theme which states... "How a mother will turn to a woman to fight for a mothers' right in terms of abuses. It shows the empowerment of woman."

In the story, the mother transcends into a fierce warrior in defense of a vulnerable and innocent child. She immediately becomes alert and cautious to save her daughter from the wicked intentions of the man.

The theme of the story "**Compostela**", revolves on how a single parent performs a dual role – that of a mother and a father at the same time providing the needs and security of her son.

The lone endeavour of a mother who by choice or circumstances is single takes on a responsibility to bring up her brood in the best possible way that she can.

The women characters in the selected short stories of Estrella Alfon who embody independence, strength and empowerment reveal transformation and development concerning the status of woman in Philippine society. Those woman characters whose stories were written during 1900's are still the prevailing images of women who show gender role development in the present society.

The Filipino society has moved from being a predominantly patriarchal society to a modern one. Economic transformations have brought new social charges as the concept of the traditional gender roles continues to be reinvented and transformed.

The above mentioned stories embodied gender role development of Filipino women as evident in present society. Among them are: The accomplished woman (Mill of the Gods), the Empowered Woman and Warriors, (Magnificence) and the Single Parent performs dual role as mother and father at the same time (Compostela).

In "**The Mill of the Gods**," Martha represents the independent career woman. She finished high school with high honors and managed to finish nursing in college.

Career development refers to the many jobs a person holds, and it should represent progress, whether through increased recognition or salary, or the respect one receives from colleagues. The more a person's career progresses in the manner, the more he or she will be judged successful (Gutek and Larwood, 2003). Women's career aspirations have evolved steadily during the 20th century, resulting in their increased workplace participation rates. According to Alzona (2004).

*"A new Filipino had arisen-Confident,
enlightened, strong in mind and body, in a word,
a woman eminently qualified to hold her place in
a modern intricate society."*

Woman have increasingly becomes more involved in the workforce. Gone are the days when women are confined in the corner of the house and are forbidden to see the light of modernity. The time has indeed changed by leap and bounce. Gonzales and Hollinsteiner (2006) assert that:

*"Women have an occupational and economic role to perform
not only for the family but also for the country as a whole,
The participation of women in all aspects of occupational
activities is a patient force in improving the economy
and raising levels of living.*

Before firms and businesses normally employ Filipino women for lens pay and secretarial functions. But at present, Filipino women are given the same opportunities as their male counterparts in the industry. In a statistics released by the Philippine Commission on Women (2010), the result of the October 2009 Labor Force Survey (LFS) showed an increase in the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for females at 49.3% (from 48.6% in 2008), and a very slight decrease for males at 78.8% (from 78.9% in 2008).

The Filipino woman has transformed herself from a mere homemaker to a working mother or an executive. She has proven to be an asset of the managerial world. She has multiple achievements in the corporate world, likewise her emotional and social life has attained remarkable success.

At present, majority of women have contributed in the development of the country in spite of the demands they encounter as mothers and wives. Women leaders who are very visible in the political arena become presidents, senators and public officials who constitute laws that promote societal transformation and development. Corazon Aquino is well known to be the first woman president. She spearheaded the country to regain democracy and freedom of expression. Women legislators make laws that would benefit the country.

Women legislators and law makers are also active and very much visible in Philippine politics. Senator Pia S. Cayetano is continuously proving that there is no limit to what Filipino women can do and achieve. She in the 13th and 14th Congress to pass several landmarks laws that mattered to common Filipinos and the marginalized sectors, particularly to women, children and senior citizens.

The rise of feminists in the society has somehow helped change the patriarchal ideology. Women have the chance to work in a man's world. Many have made a name in a male dominated world such as politics, military management, business and economics and the like. In many ways, the Filipino woman has experienced hardships and successes, martyrdom and stardom. These women, who have gone places, have done great deeds and made their country proud; inspire the women of today wherever they go.

As the natural form of society progressed, women strived toward a higher degree of independence and gender equality. Through their efforts, women now speak and fight for their rights. Women's voices against violence are now being heard. They fight back against women's oppression and abuse.

The story "**Magnificence**" is about one magnificent who represents all women and mothers who have been in the shadows but appears into the light to fight against male abuse. In the said story has transformed to an empowered woman who stood up bravely in defense of her innocent daughter who was the subject of Vicente's malicious intentions.

The concerns on abuse and violence against women has been addressed and slowly being solved spearheaded by social institutions who promote the fight against women's oppression. This battle against women's exploitation has gained increasing awareness and many women have participated actively in the advocacy.

In the Philippines, Gabriella is a movement dealing specifically with the problems of women as women, working to free women from all forms of economic and political oppression and discrimination, sexual violence and abuse, neglect and denial of their health and reproductive rights. One of Gabriella's objectives is to promote organized action to eliminate unjust and discriminatory practices, unequal and oppressive structures that deter the full development of Filipinas as persons. Gabriella is a women's alliance for all Filipino women who valiantly respond to the challenge of struggling for liberation.

They fight against problems that adversely affect women especially violence against women and children, prostitution, trafficking and other issues that concern's woman's and children's rights.

Filipino women did not only gain awareness but they have also actively participated in the crusade against women's violation and abuse. The women have found their voice through campaigns, advocacies and institutions that help promote the rights and welfare of women.

Across the globe, one could directly mention some famous and established names who have carved their names in the records of influence, popularity and history. Hillary Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, Mother Teresa, Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, Princess Diana and Queen Elizabeth are a few among the many women who have exhibited extraordinary strength of woman power.

Women have a great part to play in the progress of the country. In the apron string of women is hidden the revolutionary energy. More and more women are rising to the leadership challenge, even in some of the most male-dominated industries. Filipino women have gained and enjoyed equal rights with men. They have become presidents, senators, congresswoman and mayors. They have served in government offices, and have held cabinet positions for presidents. Filipino women have proven that they are capable of carrying out responsibilities and tasks as well as their male counterparts.

Corazon Aquino created a record by becoming the first woman president of the Philippines. She headed an advocacy for women's rights in the Philippines that can be considered the turning point for women in the country. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took over her and succeeds Aquino with the confidence of the nation's women as her driving force.

Women writers like Jessica Zafra, Paz Marquez Benitez, Kerima Polotan, Tina Juan, Rina Jimenez - David among others have established their credentials in the modern literary world and contributed to the literary excellence of the nation. It is heartening to know that today he country have educated women who are very keen on taking up administration work. The Filipino woman could already have a voice and a place for leadership and movements in society. She could experience all of man's aspects for growth and development. It would carry though the mainstreams of educations; business and many others. Her gender, rights and privileges could already be given due recognition and should not just be taken for granted.

The position of women has changed and they are gradually emerging as a force in social, cultural, as well political fields in the country. The talent, patience, inner strength, power of tolerance, insight and efficiency of a responsible and good woman helps in the governance of the country and its overall progress.

Modern women have risen for above the domestic drudgery. They are educated and aware enough to deal with any situation competently. In the present time, they are no longer the inanimate objects. They have struggled hard to establish an identity of their own. They possess enough strength and self-confidence in a brave new world.

In the past few decades, the world has seen major changes in the face of the family. One of the most striking changes in family structure has been the increase of single parent families. A single parent family is defined as a family which consists of one parent who is caring for his or her children in the home. This task panes great challenge, because of problem arising in raising children (Andelin,1998).

These days, it's not uncommon to meet single women raising their children alone. A mother may become a single parent because she chose not to marry and opted to raise her child alone. A single mother may also be a single woman who opted adopting a child. Moreover, there is also a single mother who has been married before, but due to various grounds has cancelled her marriage through divorce or annulment. A mother may also end up being a single parent because of the death of spouse wherein the wife who has a child or children chose not to remarry.

Because solo – parent families are now so prominent in society, they have become a vital subculture that will have to be accepted as a legitimate and valid unit of society (Ortigas, 1996).

In the story, "**Compostela**" the heroine is similar to a single – parent performing the dual role as a mother and father as her husband portrays the role at the same time This study focused on identifying and analyzing the images and gender role development of Filipino Women as reflected in the selected short stories. It also focused on identifying the gender role development of Filipino women as evident in the contemporary society.

To determine the images and gender role development of Filipino Women, the researcher selected four short stories, namely: The Servant Girl, Mill of the Gods, Magnificence and Compostela.

In completing the research, the literary forms of narration and description were used to reveal the images of the Filipino Women as reflected in the short stories. Likewise, the literary approaches such as psychological, sociological and feminist were employed to describe the gender role development of Filipino women as depicted in the stories and as evident in the contemporary society.

The researcher also made use of literary elements such as characterization, dialogue, setting, and theme to identify and describe the different roles portrayed by the Filipino women in the selected short stories. They are also used to reveal the true feelings of the women today.

The choices of words given to each female character in the short story, the fierceness, assertiveness, submissiveness, vigilance, independence and courageousness of character shown in different portrayals as well as the theme played an important role in unraveling the character the traditional woman never imagined portraying.

Generally, the identified literary elements present in the short stories reflected women's aspirations of being liberated from the condition of submissiveness, unhappiness and inequality. The women who are single parents, empowered women and warriors, and accomplished women are confirmations of gender role developments evident in present society.

In conclusion, The Filipino Women reflect the image of a willing victim, dutiful wife, furious and resentful daughter, protective and selfless mother. The modern roles of women in relation to gender role development are those of a career woman, the vigilant and single mother. Many women in contemporary society exemplify gender role development such as women who are single parent performing the dual role of a mother and a father, the empowered women who are leaders and warriors of the nation and the accomplished women who are professionals in their chosen careers. The gender role developments show the evolution of women as they raise themselves from the traditional world the patriarchal society has cloaked them. When women seek change to conditions of marriage, to conditions of work; to rights, to citizenship, they simultaneously seek new definition of womanhood, and that is regard themselves on equal footing as men in human activities and endeavors.

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