
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Colors of the Browns: A Thematic Approach in the Teaching of Philippine Literature

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| ABSTRACT

Literature has always been an instrument that reflects the life and times of people of various ages and civilizations. This is the reason why Literature subjects are incorporated in the Philippine curricula from the secondary to the tertiary level. The aim of this course is to broaden the knowledge of academic patrons as regards the realities that engulf a particular society. The researcher has foreseen the importance of Philippine Literature instruction, especially with the advent of K to 12. Thus, this literary research is the proponents' dissertation which intends to add to the existing methodologies and approaches in the teaching of Philippine Literature in the contemporary. The researcher has come up with an instructional guide that would serve as alternative reference material for Literature teachers in the K to 12 program. However, only three (3) analyses from the instructional guide were included in this journal. This instructional guide takes a detour from the conventional instruction of Literature by focusing on the thematic approach rather than the biographical, historical and regional approach. Furthermore, the study is a breakthrough in Philippine Literature instruction since it would be the first non-empirical study to venture into the thematic facilitation of Philippine letters for grades 11 and 12. The instructional guide explores the literature written by Filipino authors in the past and present in accordance with theme, conflict, and symbol to determine their worth and merits through analytical inquiry. Each literary selection is analyzed using the text as the primary evidence. The thematic evaluation reveals the four main characteristics of the Filipinos: Filipinos are loving and passionate; they are strong and resilient; they are a product of hybridity; they have greatly suffered, but their positivity toward life is always put in the obvious.

| KEYWORDS

Literary Research, Philippine curricula, K12 Program, Thematic Approach, Analytical Inquiry

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1. Introduction

Literature has always been an instrument that reflects the life and times of people of various ages and civilizations. This is the reason why Literature subjects are incorporated in the Philippine curricula from the secondary to the tertiary level. The aim of this course is to broaden the knowledge of academic patrons as regards the realities that engulf society both in the past and in the contemporary. Various approaches in the study of Philippine literature have been deployed in order to facilitate a fruitful understanding of the life and times of the Filipinos through the years.

The historical approach has been the most popular approach in the teaching of Literature courses since the characteristics of literature in different eras provide a thorough understanding of the life and culture of people who lived in such a particular time. As X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia in the book "Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama" put it: "the historical approach seeks to understand a literary work by investigating the social, cultural, and intellectual context that produced it – a context that necessarily includes the artists' biography and milieu." (Kennedy and Gioia, 1995). Asuncion David Maramba, in her book "Philippine Contemporary Literature", has the same insight as that of Kennedy and Gioia. According to her, "The very popular historical approach, based on Taine's 'moment-milieu' sees literature as both a reflection and a product of the times and circumstances in which it was written. Man, as a member of a particular society or a nation at a particular time, is central to the approach, and whenever a teacher gives historical or biographical backgrounds in introducing a selection or arranges a literature

course in chronological order, he is hewing close to this approach." (Maramba, 1993) It has always been a reality that Filipinos have known about their own history through the chronicles of the people who have lived in a particular time in the past.

More so, the usage of the historical approach further presents the lifestyle and attitudes of Filipinos from the precolonial to the contemporary. Baltazar, Erestain and Estanislao also relied on the historical approach in the conceptualization of their Philippine Literature textbook "Philippine Literature: Past and Present" as the text aims to "delve on the intensive study of a time period, a particular author, a specific theme, or of specific works which are left to the students and teachers to reflect on." (Baltazar et al.) In addition, the historical approach orients the literary patrons to learn about the struggles of the Filipinos as they courageously fought for freedom against the colonizers for more than 350 years until the Philippine independence in 1945. The historical approach also bequeaths the Filipino learner with fragments of what happened during the martial law and how the Filipino people were admired by the whole world after slating the most peaceful revolution in the cosmos. All of these factual relays of information are credited to the deployment of the historical approach.

Another widely used approach in the teaching of Philippine Literature is the biographical approach which is closely related to the historical approach. Kennedy and Gioia said that the biographical approach "begins with the simple but central insight that literature is written by actual people and that understanding an author's life can help readers more thoroughly comprehend the work." (Kennedy and Gioia, 1995).

A biographical approach is an effective tool in acquainting the students as regards the life and times of the Filipino authors and how their lives have affected the output of their works. Our very own Dr. Jose Rizal is a classic example of the scrutiny of this approach. Rizal wrote his first novel, "Noli Me Tangere", when he was in his early 20s and was newly arrived in Europe. Rizal was so much of an idealist during those times, and all he wanted to do was to emancipate the Filipino people from the snares of injustice and lack of education. Thus, Crisostomo Ibarra was brought to life. He is a character who is very much like Rizal in that particular time. Ibarra, just like Rizal, is a well-educated, well-mannered, selfless idealist who simply wanted to eradicate prejudice and bigotry in the Philippines. One may also look into the works of Manuel Arguilla and Nick Joaquin. Manuel Arguilla was born and raised in Ilocos, where he had spent most of his life before going to Manila and joining the guerilla movement against the Japanese forces. He wrote, "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" and other stories which are likely set in the province. His stories describe the simplicity of the common townfolk while elaborately creating a picturesque detail of nature's grandeur in his place. On the other hand, Nick Joaquin, who is known to be the best English short story writer in the Philippines, was born in Paco Manila from an affluent family. Try to check on the setting of his literature, "May Day Eve", for example. The story's setting is elite and elaborate with sophisticated Spanish details. These kinds of ambiance are also noticeable among other stories of Joaquin. Thus, the social status and lifestyle of an author truly contribute to the outcome of his work. With all these in mind, one cannot take for granted the importance of the biographical approach in the study and instruction of Philippine Literature. However, Kennedy and Gioia also mentioned that a biographical critic must be careful not to take the biographical facts of a writer's life too far in criticizing the works of that writer: the biographical critic "focuses on explicating the literary work by using the insight provided by knowledge of the author's life. Biographical data should amplify the meaning of the text, not drown it out with irrelevant material." (Kennedy and Gioia, 1995). Furthermore, Edilberto K. Tiempo, in his book "Literary Criticism in the Philippines", also shared his thoughts on the overemphasis of the author's biography. According to him, there is nothing wrong with the discussion of the author's life, but the allotment of fifty minutes of a class solely to get to know the number of wives and look-alikes of authors is quite irrelevant. (Tiempo, 1995)

The most recent approach in the study and instruction of Philippine Literature prior to the advent of k to 12 is the regional approach. Mrs. Essel L. De Jesus, a graduate of Master of Arts in Literature from the University of Sto Tomas, and a Literature professor at the University of the Assumption said that apart from the autonomous universities that use the thematic approach in the study of Philippine letters, almost all universities and colleges in the Philippines currently use the regional approach in the instruction of Philippine Literature. Lacia et al., in their published literature text "Literature of the Philippines", backs the statement of De Jesus by testifying that such is undertaken "as part of the mandatory requirements of the new General Education Curriculum (GEC) as adopted and promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education in accordance to the pertinent provisions of RA No. 7722 otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994. CHED Memorandum Order no. 59 under Interdisciplinary Approach letter c states that:

'Literature One (or the first Literature subject) must cover 'The Literatures of the Philippines' and should focus on the literature of all regions of the Philippines, whether written in native or foreign languages from the beginning of Philippine history to the present. Care should be taken to ensure adequate attention to literary texts and authors outside the National Capital Region." (Lacia et al., 2008)

It can very well be noted that the said memorandum mandates the study of the literature of the Philippines from a regional perspective. Thus, almost all current Literature One books present the literature of the different regions of the Philippines written

by authors born and raised from their respective regions from the precolonial to the contemporary period. The facilitation of the regional approach is also an effective tool in the study and instruction of Literature because it covers both the historical and the biographical approaches while at the same time orienting the learners as regards the culture of the various regions. Estrelita Valeros Gruenberg, the editor of *The De La Salle University Reader*, also came up with a textbook anthology, "Writings from the Different Regions of the Philippines", which according to her, intends to further awareness and appreciation of the unique characteristics of each place, and at the same time identify the similarities that will lead to an understanding of the Filipino. (Gruenberg, 2000) Bienvenido Lumbera also supports the deployment of this approach as posted in his essay entitled "Harnessing Regional Literature for National Literature" posted in Fr. Francis Xavier Salcedo's blog "Sulat at Ulat na Pangmulat." According to Lumbera, "The need still remains for the bodies of works now designated as 'regional literature' to be collected and studied by specialists. Translation into Filipino of regional works has been started, but needs to be gone into with greater vigor." (Lumbera, ret. 2015)

Driven by the profundity of the thematic approach in the study and instruction of literature, the researcher decided to collate Philippine literature selections, which are commonly discussed at the tertiary level. Short stories, essays, poems, and plays, regardless of era and regional origin, were systematically analyzed using the text as the primary data. The researcher chose 16 selections from all the analyzed pieces of literature and grouped them according to their universal themes. Only sixteen selections were included in order to meet the 40-hour requirement of the course for the K to 12 program. The literary research is structured in the form of an instructional guide and is divided into four chapters in consonance with the selections' prevalent themes in order to cover the instruction of Philippine Literature in four grading periods.

2. Analysis

2.1 Of Love and War

Manuel Arguilla's "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" shows how Filipinos love in two important facets. The first facet is the Filipino's love for family. The father in the story prodded Baldo to pass through the Waig instead of the Camino Real in order for him to determine whether or not Maria is capable of adjusting herself to the lifestyle where Leon is raised. He intentionally did this to check if Maria truly deserves to be the bride of his son. The father values his son so much that he does not want him to be with an unworthy individual for the rest of his life. The thought of Leon being with the wrong person gives the father inner turmoil prior to his meeting with Maria. This can be proven when he summons Baldo to his room before he comes face to face with Leon and Maria. "There was no light in Father's room. There was no movement. He sat in the big armchair by the western window, and a star shone directly through it. He was smoking, but he removed the roll of tobacco from his mouth when he saw me. He laid it carefully on the windowsill before speaking." The father, in this part of the story, is obviously in a state of gloom. Doubt fills his being. There is no light in the room which suggests a somber atmosphere in his persona. At the same time, he is smoking – people often smoke when they are anxious or stressed.

Eventually, he asks Baldo three questions in order for him to find out the character of the soon-to-be wife of his elder son.

"Did you meet anybody on the way?" he asked.

"No, Father," I said. "Nobody passes through the Waig at night."

He reached for his roll of tobacco and hithced himself up in the chair.

"She is very beautiful, Father."

"Was she afraid of Labang?" My father had not raised his voice, but the room seemed to resound with it. And again, I saw her eyes on the long curving horns and the arm of my brother Leon around her shoulders.

"No, Father, she was not afraid."

"On the way---"

"She looked at the stars, Father. And Manong Leon sang."

"What did he sing?"

"---Sky Sown with Stars... She sang with him."

The father's first question, "Did you meet anybody on the way?" and Baldo's response "No father, nobody passes through the Waig at night", only proves that the Waig is really an inconvenient route, especially during the night. It is a very long, dark and bumpy road which takes them hours to arrive home as compared to the short and more comfortable travel if they take the Camino Real. The father's second question – "Was she afraid of Labang?" which is asked in a low but resounding voice, shows the depth and vitality of the inquiry, which would concretize the character of Maria. Maria is a city girl who is raised in a modern society that

is very much different from that of Leon's. The father could have just asked Ka Celin to bring Leon and Maria straight to their house with the kalesa if he only wanted to. Yet, he still instructs Baldo to fetch the couple in a caritella pulled by a scary bull – Labang.

The father intentionally did this so he could confirm the humility and adaptability of Maria, which is substantiated by the response of Baldo when the boy was asked if Maria was afraid. Baldo responds by saying, "No, father, she was not afraid." Furthermore, Baldo gives additional information which totally cushions the goodness of Maria as well as his son, Leon. Baldo tells the father that the couple sang the song "Sky Sown with Stars" along the way. That song was sung by the father and his two sons when they were still working in the field together. The thought of Leon, who has stayed in the city for quite some time but had not yet forgotten that familiar song, gives the father an innate joy. More so, the thought of Maria, a city girl, who tends to sing the song with his son along that scary and deserted road, cements Maria's belonging and inclusion to their world as well as to their family. The father has gotten all the evidence to prove that Maria is indeed a good person and that she deserves to be the wife of his beloved son. This following text, after the first three questions of the father, tells us that Maria has passed the father's test.

"He was silent again. I could hear the low voices of Mother and my sister Aurelia downstairs. There was also the voice of my brother Leon, and I thought that Father's voice must have been like it when Father was young. He had laid the roll of tobacco on the windowsill once more. I watched the smoke waver faintly upward from the lighted end and vanish slowly into the night outside."

The father rolls his tobacco on the window sill once more. This represents his ease after hearing the responses of Baldo. Smoke is viewed as something which is not good – something that is unwanted due to its harmful effects on people. The description of the smoke which waivered faintly upward from the lighted end and eventually vanished into the night outside signifies the father's liberation from his fears and doubts. The father is finally relieved. He asks Baldo his fourth and final question when Leon and Maria come inside the room – "Have you watered Labang?" Baldo answers by saying that Labang is still resting; nevertheless, the father insists that it's time he waters Labang. The father's prod for him to water Labang is a subtle way of saying that Baldo needs to leave the room because he is now ready to meet and welcome Maria – his daughter.

The second facet shows how Filipinos value relationships. The admiration of Baldo toward Maria has not waned from the start to the end. Baldo's description of Maria at the onset until the end of the story gives us the impression that Maria is truly a woman of grace. She is an epitome of a true Filipina – simple yet elegant and beautiful. She has long nails, but they were not painted. Even her fragrance is a breath of a morning when papayas are in bloom. As a matter of fact, Baldo, being the younger brother of Leon, felt the affection and connection of Maria toward him, despite the fact that it is only their first meeting. This is felt by the boy when Maria calls him by his name while lightly placing her hand on his shoulder.

"She stepped down from the carretela of Ca Celin with quick, delicate grace. She was lovely. She was tall. She looked up to my brother with a smile, and her forehead was on a level with his mouth."

"You are Baldo," she said and placed her hand lightly on my shoulder. Her nails were long, but they were not painted. She was fragrant like a morning when papayas were in bloom. And a small dimple appeared momentarily high on her right cheek. "And this is Labang of whom I have heard so much."

Likewise, the relationship between Leon and Maria is undoubtedly true and modest. Maria has accepted everything about Leon. As a matter of fact, she did not only accept him. She valued everything about Leon – his being, his ways, his culture, his place. No wonder the affection which was manifested by Maria is completely reciprocated by Leon. He cares for her so much that he comforts her with puny fears and worries. The couple displays a perfect relationship – a relationship cemented by love.

2.2 Of Strength and Resilience

"Like the Molave" utilizes the first-person point of view as it addresses the late great Dr. Jose Rizal in the first part of the poem. It pleads the Filipino patriot not to rest yet, for there are still a lot of things that need to be done and accomplished. It is as if the persona begs for Rizal to stay for his mission is not yet over.

Not yet, Rizal, not yet. Sleep not in peace:

There are a thousand waters to be spanned;

There are a thousand mountains to be crossed;

There are a thousand crosses to be borne.

The fifth to the seventh line suggest that the Filipinos has grown weak due to years of colonization from various races, thus the attitude of dependence.

Our shoulders are not strong; our sinews are

Grown flaccid with dependence, smug with ease

Under another's wing. Rest not in peace;

The persona in the eight to the eleventh line once again begs for Rizal to stay, for there is a great need for young people who could stand on their own two feet and are willing to sacrifice themselves in order to fight for justice and freedom; Just like what the hero had done when he was in his youth.

Not yet, Rizal, not yet. The land has need

Of young blood – and what younger than your own,

Forever spilt in the great name of freedom,

Forever oblate on the altar of the free?

The persona further pleads to the fallen martyrs who have shed their own blood to stay alive, because just like Rizal, their passion, brilliance and vigor for liberty and goodwill is in dire need for the people of the present, who have seemingly lost the passion and desire to continue what the brave men of the past have envisioned for the future.

Not you alone, Rizal. O souls

And spirits of the martyred brave, arise!

Arise and scour the land! Shed once again

Your willing blood! Infuse the vibrant red

Into our thin anemic veins; until

We pick up your Promethean tools and, strong,

Out of the depthless matrix of your faith

In us, and on the silent cliffs of freedom,

We carve for all time your marmoreal dream!

The last four lines in the first stanza reveal the primary objective of the persona – revitalize the strength and the resilience of the Filipino people – the strength and resilience comparable to the firm, resilient, steadfast and strong molave tree. Thus, the thought of revitalization leads to the reality that the Filipinos are truly strong and resilient; however, they turned flaccid.

Until our people, seeing, are become

Like the molave, firm, resilient, staunch,

Rising on the hillside, unafraid,

Strong in its own fibre; yes, like the molave!

The poem's second stanza shifts the persona's address from Rizal to the youth. Here, the realization is that Rizal and the fallen martyrs are not the true recipients of the persona's pleas. The petitions, as a matter of fact, are addressed to the Filipino youth. The young people of the present time have the innate abilities that could strengthen the seemingly weakening verve of the brown race. The persona enumerates a spectacle of traits that young people possess.

The youth of the land is a proud and noble appellation,

The youth of the land is a panoramic poem,

The youth of the land is a book of paradoxes,

The youth of the land is a pat on one's back,

The youth of the land is a huge canvas of spectral colors,

The youth of the land is an epic tragedy-comedy,

The youth of the land is a crashing symphony,
The youth of the land is a child grown old in tears,
The youth of the land is an old man laughing through perpetual infancy;
A bastard child of a thousand dreams, masquerading and dancing,
The youth of the land.

The first five lines of the second stanza describe the magnificence of the Filipino youth. They are a noble name, for they come from a noble race. They are a panoramic poem because of their ability to permeate beauty. They are a book of paradoxes as they can make impossibility a possibility. They are a pat on one's back since they radiate enthusiasm and positivity. They are a canvass of spectral colors since their capabilities go beyond measure.

Furthermore, the last five lines present the perplexity that envelope the youth and the Filipinos in the majority. They are an epic tragicomedy for their lives are a combination of happiness and sadness. They are a crashing symphony because of their desire to pursue a noble purpose but, in some instances, fall astray. They are children grown old in tears, for some have already lost their youth and yet have not been able to fulfil their cause. They are old men laughing through perpetual infancy, for some have not progressed in the course of their own time and endeavor. They are a bastard of a thousand dreams who continuously dance and masquerade since failure is often covered with smiles.

Even so, the Filipino people, the youth in particular, despite the array of disappointment and hopelessness, can survive and stand the test of fate, for they have what it takes to be like a molave.

2.3. Of Grief and Smiles

Carlos Bulosan further presents the downside of Filipinos in a humorous manner, one of which is the Filipinos' inclination toward gambling which is very predominant even at present. The story specifically focuses on cockfighting which is considered to be the favorite betting game of the Filipinos. The persona's father symbolizes the poor Filipinos who entirely put their hopes in gambling in order to rise from their present social state. The plot becomes more hilarious as the father seemingly has prioritized and exhausted all his time and energy on his rooster, Burick, among all the members of his family in the hope that this rooster would eventually change their fortune. The persona cites a number of comical instances where their father has treated the rooster as the most important living thing in their household. "The rainy season was approaching. There were rumors of famine. The grass did not grow, and our carabao became thin. Father's fighting cock, Burick, was practically the only healthy thing in our household."

"Its father, Kanaway, had won a house for us some three years before, and Father had commanded me to give it the choicest rice. He took the soft-boiled eggs from the plate of my sister Marcela, who was sick with meningitis that year."

"It was during this impasse that Father sat every day in our backyard with his fighting cock. He would not go anywhere. He would not do anything. He just sat there caressing Burick and exercising his legs. He spat at his hackles and rubbed them, looking far away with a big dream."

"Mother was very patient. But the day came when she kicked him off the bench. He fell on the floor face down, looked up at her, and then resumed his sleep."

"She dipped a cup in the jar and splashed the cold water on Father's face. He jumped up, looked at mother with anger, and went to Burick's pen. He gathered the cock in his arms and went down the porch. He sat on a log in the backyard and started caressing his fighting cock."

"Mother threw a piece of wood at the cock. Father saw her in time. He ducked and covered the cock with his body. The wood struck him. It cut a hole at the base of his head. He got up and examined Burick. He acted as though the cock were the one that got hurt. He looked up at Mother, and his face was pitiful."

More so, the funniest part of the story is when the father finally gets a match for Burick despite the fact that he doesn't even have a single centavo to bet. He is simply backed by other gamblers before the closing of the deal. "But two of the peasants caught Father's arm and whispered something to him. They slipped some money in his hand and pushed him toward Burcio." This is a common scenario among Filipinos who sometimes seem hopeful to win the hundred million peso lottery but, in reality, do not even bet. Because of the ecstasy toward the scheduled fight of Burick, the father and son go home with the dream of finally making it big in the cockfight.

The story, no matter how seemingly funny, still reveals a harsh reality in the Filipinos' lives. A lot of Filipinos suffer in great poverty. Many brown people wear themselves out just to have something to stuff their stomachs with – just like what the mother and the sister do. "Mother took my sister Francisca with her. They went from house to house in the neighborhood, pounding rice for some people and hauling drinking water for others. They came home with their share in a big basket that Mother carried on her head." Another important thought that one may decipher from this story is the Filipina women's strength and resilience as portrayed by the mother in the story. The absence and unproductivity of fathers in Filipino families do not necessarily mean a total downfall because the mothers will always be there to foment the patriarchal shortages. Thus, this story is another proof that the Filipino people can always find the means to survive and smile despite all the strife of life.

3. Conclusion

The analyses of the above-presented literature reveal four predominant themes which point out the communal characteristics of Filipinos which make up their identity. The literature in the first chapter mirrors the different facets of love that permeate the Filipino people. Here, the readers realize how Filipinos value relationships, just like how the story "How my Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" emphasizes the strong family ties of the Filipinos. The father's deep concern for Leon, which prods him to put Maria to the test, as well as the rest of the family's mixed emotions toward the marriage of Leon, signify the brown's familial attachment or ties. On the other hand, "The Wedding Dance" highlights how Filipinos value their culture and tradition as it is juxtaposed with their value for a romantic relationship. Awiayao shows how far Filipinos can sacrifice for the sake of the preservation of existing norms and traditions. On the contrary, the character of Lumnay revels in the Filipino's endurance as well as their capacity to stand against all odds in the name of mutual love.

"May Day Eve" makes a different entry point as it adroitly describes how Filipinos, just like any other people, celebrate love in the bliss of youth. More so, the story differentiates love from the perspective of the young as compared to the perspective of the old. The last story in the first chapter, "Faith, Love Time and Dr. Lazaro", comprehensively delves into the vital aspects of love - love for the self, love for the family, love for the profession, and most importantly, love for the Almighty. It further orients the readers that life without love, especially toward God, is death in disguise. All four pieces of literature prove that Filipinos are loving people despite all the tribulations that go against their penchant for it. The brown race is a loving race. They are always ready to take part in any kind of war in order to protect what they truly love – their family, their culture, their country and their faith.

Chapter two mirrors the strength and resilience of the Filipinos. The selected literature reflects how Filipinos survive life's atrocities with pride, honor and valor. "My Life in the News" is a contemporary poem that showcases the humility and endurance of the brown race as they find solace in very little things. Yet, their importance and contribution to the world can never be taken for granted. More so, the essay "Like the Molave" is a heart-blazing motivation and eye-opener among the Filipinos, most especially the youth, who have seemingly lost the inherited fervor which has been passed on by our patriots and forebears. The literature reminds its readers of the kind of people the Filipinos are – strong and resilient like the molave tree.

Alberto P. Romulo's famous essay "I Am a Filipino" completely encapsulates the glory of the Filipino people with resounding emphasis. The essay cemented the brown race's pride and honor by mapping the historical timeline of the Filipinos as they come to terms with various hurts, pains, sacrifices and struggles in the light of claiming what is truly and rightfully theirs. On the other hand, the theme of the short story "Footnote to Youth" may seem to delve into untimely love. Yet, if given further scrutiny, one will also realize that the story also banks on the resiliency of the Filipinos, who, despite the intensity of their poverty, still manage to love and survive.

Chapter three mirrors two significant aspects among Filipinos – their pains as well as their happiness. This chapter contains literature that presents the simplicity of Filipino bliss together with literature that manifest their poignant side. "My Father's Tragedy" manifests the comical side of the Filipinos as well as their writers. Carlos Bulosan, in his story, adroitly transformed a real Filipino setting into a comical pun. Yet, the erudition in the literature still remains at bay. "Rice and Bullets" is a tragic story that, in one way or another, happens in Filipino lives. Despite the humility of their joys and needs, sometimes, Filipinos even need to shed their own blood, or worst, sacrifice their own lives in order to temporarily sate their beloved's gastric protests.

"A Tropical Winter's Tale" presents some unacceptable yet unsurprisingly existing conditions in the Philippines. These are discrimination, corruption, polygamy and crime. Despite all these untoward realities in the Philippines, the story proves that whatever pains and tribulations the Filipinos encounter, love and justice shall never be out of their faith. "The World is an Apple" further digs on the illnesses in the Philippine society which result in poverty, crime and corruption. Here, Alberto Florentino once again reveals the humility of the Filipinos' needs and happiness. But more often, Filipino families, especially those who live in the slums, are not even able to address their basic commodities. The play nevertheless leaves a challenge among its readers and audience as regards the salvage of the suffering browns.

Chapter four mirrors the hybridity of Filipinos as well as their affinity toward other races. The last chapter opens another avenue in the identity of the Filipinos, which springs from centuries of consanguine merging and multiculturalism. The colonization of the

whites has been the primary reason for multiculturalism among Filipinos. This is the reason why Filipinos are often tagged with the so-called "colonial mentality as they tend to have so much adulation among the ways of foreign counterparts. Nonetheless, the essay "Where is the Patis?" tells otherwise. The writer makes it clear that wherever the Filipino goes, he will always be in constant search of the things with which he grew up, not to mention the palatability of the Filipino dish. "Scent of Apples" generally tackles the same theme. The penchant of the Filipinos to stay in the land of foreign counterparts is only at the onset. After a few years of stay, Filipinos begin to feel alienated. Displacement takes over them that even the scent of apples, which is only present in snow-laden lands, does not have any impact at all.

"The True Story" of Ah To speaks about the dilemma of naturalized Filipinos. Chinese migrants are classic examples. The Philippines' trade association with China even before the coming of the colonizers has already resulted in mixed marriages and naturalization. Ah To, for one, is a full-blooded Chinese who later became a naturalized Filipino and at one point fought against the Japanese with the Filipino flag. This only proves that being a Filipino in the truest sense of the word is not solely dependent on color or blood relations. It is more of the oneness in the heart. "The Homing Mandarin..." also premises on the same theme, as Mickey, a Chinese Filipino borne from a Chinese father and Filipina mother, finds himself displaced as regards his identity. Confusion looms over his life for a long time since society seemingly only accepts him "half", for he is half Chinese and half Filipino. He is not brown in color, yet, that does not forbid him to claim the fullness of his identity as a true Filipino. Half-bred Filipinos are Filipinos, for they have the same affection toward the land of the browns.

The summation of the universal themes of the given literary selections places the fundamental characteristics of the Filipinos in a nutshell. The researcher has designed his work in this fashion because of his ultimate desire to add onto existing approaches in the study, appreciation and instruction of Philippine Literature, especially in the advent of K to 12. This instructional guide aims to shed additional light among the teachers of Literature in the process of unlocking the structure, decoding the symbols, and extracting the theme of the literature. More so, the study and instruction of Literature have unrestricted boundaries. It is because of its "unrestricted news" that the researcher remains hopeful that new approaches, strategies and methodologies in the study and instruction of Literature may still be introduced and be delved into by future risk-averse researchers in order to further strengthen the thrust of the Literature curricula.

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