

F. Sionil Jose's Novel "Viajero" Captures Different Forms of Filipino Diaspora

Matilda H. Dimaano

College of Arts and Sciences, Batangas State University, Rizal Avenue Extension, Batangas City 4200, Philippines
matilda.dimaano@gmail.com

Abstract— *Literature as form of art can be a medium for expression of man's lived experiences. As P.T. Barnum, the greatest showman stated, literature is one of the most interesting and significant expressions of humanity. Diaspora literature conveys the idea of homeland, and narrates stories of people's journeys. This study describes Filipino diasporic experiences as captured in the novel "Viajero". Results show that different forms of diaspora are depicted including diaspora with cause, diaspora as escapists, diaspora silent at home and diaspora of self. Diaspora with cause is a form of exile where the person departed his country with noble intent. Diaspora as escapists is a form of exile where the person flies out of his country because of committed wrongdoing to existing leadership, while diaspora silent at home is a form of exile where a person leaves his country because of discontent, frustration from experienced injustice and loss of trust in a corrupt government. Diaspora of self is a form of exile where a person leaves his country full of dreams and hopes for attaining better future but experienced varied forms of hardships and abuses. The lived experiences of Filipinos can serve as reference point for migrant workers on the kind of life in store for them so they will have a sense of preparedness when they pursue their dreams of better future. This would aid governments in developing better policies protecting migrant workers' rights, and allow more humane and self-fulfilling transition in foreign lands without losing their sense-identity.*

Keywords— *Diaspora, El Viajero, Filipinos, human and self-fulfilling transition, lived experiences*

I. INTRODUCTION

The meaningful lived experience of man is captured in literature as this is the foundation of life that makes people see the world as viewed by others. In literature words are alive that teach the readers on life experiences that touches their hearts. It enables them to connect human relationships as literature serves as the very mirror to understand their own selves, the society, the world and the realities in life. P.T. Barnum, the greatest showman and most progressive entrepreneur of the 19th century,

stated that literature is one of the most interesting and significant expressions of humanity (Kleckner, 2017). It helps address human nature and conditions that affect people as well as taught them to live their lives to the fullest (Theodysseyonline.com Website).

Reading literature enriches life and serves as a gateway of learning. People learn about the past and enrich their knowledge and understanding of the world as literature unites mankind. According to Tolstoy, without literature men would be like wild beasts because it endows an understanding, empathy in the reader, even for someone who is much separated to him by time and distance (Quora.com Website).

The British scholar and novelist C.S. Lewis stated that literature does not only add reality but also enriches the necessary competencies that the daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become. Thinking patterns and social norms prevalent in society are portrayed in varied literary works which depict different facets of man's life. These works also stirred a person's imagination and creativity and builds strong connection to the audience through messages imparted. Emotions portrayed in these works are associated with the readers as they become emotionally involve, which have deep impact on their minds and lives (Buzzle. com Website).

Life is best understood when reading great literary works as these help a person sees the different facets of life and its perspectives. Literature is important as it lays the foundation of a fulfilling life in terms of breadth of knowledge, moral values, and enjoyment which adds life to the living. Among the literary genres, it is the novel that best exemplified the significant human experiences and realistic picture of the society. Recreated in the novels is the social world of man, his relationship with his family, with the community, with politics and state. The many plots comprising the novel depicts societal problems that highlight people's sufferings and hardship. It serves as a reservoir of human experiences like hardships encountered in life, frustrations, disappointments, pains and sufferings. Kennedy et al., (1993) claimed that among the forms of imaginative

literature, the novel has far outdistanced the popularity of other literary genres. This is so because the novelist tries to create in the readers certain experiences in actual life. This sense of actuality may be the quality that sets the novel apart from other long narratives or fictional literature. It is in the words of Reeve (1975), a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it was written. In terms of the writer's choice, the novels maybe historical, psychological or social in content. Historical novel chooses an age or era in the past where it recaptures its spirit and atmosphere, its historical events and characters to give authenticity to the narration while psychological novel transfers the setting from the outside world to the mind and interior life of the individual. Social novel deals with mores and customs of a distinct social group and the social, economic, political, racial, and problems faced by those in society.

As regards to diaspora literature, it consisted of the idea of homeland, and narratives regarding harsh journeys of people either voluntary or compelled in terms of economic, political or social as it continuously connects to the homeland of these people personally or vicariously. Their relationship is defined by their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity. The following elements provide basis for the origin of diaspora in literature which focuses on either individual or community attachment to homeland and these include the sense of yearning for their homeland and the curious attachment to the traditions and culture of their country and ethnic group, religion and language (Shodhganga.inflibnet. Website). According to the British Indian novelist and essayist Rushdie (1991), the migrant remains a peripheral man, a creature living on the edge as returning to homeland is metaphorical and the yearning for homeland is often counted by the desire to belong to the new home.

Experiences of displacement and the otherness of the other, the new phenomena of hybridity, crisis of language, culture and double consciousness are considered the foci of diasporic literature. A person who is exiled is either forced or voluntarily leaves his homeland which leads him to experience identity confusion, identification and alienation problems. Once he is in a foreign land, he must know himself and blend in his new environment as the core of diasporic consciousness is the problem of identity. Zang (2000) explained that diaspora enacts a sociocultural practice that thrives on a process of constant resignification of the established assumptions and meanings of identity. As the exiles try to merge with people from another country their culture, behavior, relationship, and personality are affected. There is that feeling of non-acceptance and loss of sense of belongingness.

In Philippine literature, exilic sensibility is fundamental. The Filipino is an exile whether at home or abroad, and the exilic consciousness is central to Philippine literature in English regardless of the side of the Pacific on which it is published or written, or in which country such literature characters reside (Delmendo, 2005). Further, in most critic evaluation of Philippine writers of Fiction in English, it occurs time and again the theme that Filipino is a stranger in his own house; that the Filipino is pictured as an outsider, searching for his identity, struggling with alienation of one form or another and that the search and the journey are pervasive symbols in Philippine literature (Galdon, 1972). This holds true to the novel of F. Sionil Jose "Viajero" which means traveler or wanderer. It depicts one of the pressing social problems that haunts the country today, the problem on human migration or diaspora.

According to Khan (2015) human migration is the movement of people from one place to another to seek permanent or semi-permanent residence. People considered moving away from home in search for a better life. There are many factors that contribute to the rapid increase in human migration. The United Nations in 2014 reported the highest level of 59.5 million forced migration of people because of violence, conflict, and persecution. There are also the push and pull factors which include social, political and economic causes. Among the causes, the most pressing reason for migration is economic followed by political. People leave their homeland in search for opportunities and greener pasture. Migrants tend to work abroad to escape the depressing condition of poverty and unemployment, discrimination, and oppression. These people would rather take the risk and endure all the misery, abuses, frustration and despair out of migration to attain their dreams and hopes of finding the opportunities they seek in life.

In the Philippines the trend of migration is nothing new (Wood, 2007). It is a country of emigration since the Philippines is one among the largest migrant countries of origin in the world. It is part of Filipino's pervasive culture deeply-rooted in them to migrate to have better life despite the risks and vulnerabilities they are likely to face. For decades, sizeable numbers of Filipinos have left home in search of permanent settlement or temporary work overseas, trends long attributed to the fragile economy (Asis, 2006). In many ways, it shaped the Philippine society. Labor migration of Filipinos affects their families for decades as there are limited employment opportunities in the country. Filipinos are motivated to migrate for brighter future abroad or for financial rewards. But, on the grounds is often very different as migrants remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse including contract violations, sexual harassment, violence

and discrimination (Centerformigrantadvocacy.com Website).

Hence, in this study, the varied diasporic experiences of Filipinos are captured in the novel *Viajero*. This study aimed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Describe the different types of diaspora experienced by Filipinos.
2. Discuss the reasons of Filipinos for leaving their country.
3. Provide insights on what can be gleaned out of these experiences.

II. METHODOLOGY

The novel "*Viajero*" by F. Sionil Jose is the primary source material of the study. This study made use of descriptive method in looking into portrayals of realities and characterizations of personalities in the novel. This involved content analysis which is a systematic technique in analyzing message content and message handling. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts and researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writers, the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are a part (Umsl.edu/-wilmarthp.com Website, 2004). Stephens (2015) explained that content analysis examine what texts are about, considering the content from a perspective, such as socio-historical, gender, culture, or thematic studies.

According to Bautista et al., (1993) in literary criticism, the use of content analysis aims to maintain the writer's intentions, arguments, thematic substance, and target audience. It aims also to describe the nature of the situation, as it exists in the novel studied and explore the causes of particular phenomena. It involves examining the novel studied on the assumption that a novel of socio-historical nature is a historical document in terms of setting, characterization and subject matter.

In this regard in dissecting and analyzing the novel, sociological and historical approaches to literary criticism were used. According to Kennedy et al., (2016) when using the sociological approach, a critic examines literature in the cultural, economic, and political context in which it is written or received; he might look at the society or context in which the text was written or might look at the society in which the text is read or seen or heard; he might look at the culture of the society, including standards of behavior, etiquette, the relations between opposing groups, and critic might also look at the economy and politics of the society, including its system of government, the rights of individuals, how wealth is distributed, and who holds the power.

Sociological approach may be considered as an extension of the historical approach to literary criticism as both considered literature as an expression of the man within a given social situation. Such social situation is often reduced to a question of economics, thus passing into the "proletarian approach". In so-doing, the socio-historical approach tends to underscore the conflict between two classes in the spectrum of their class or social stratification. In the essence, the sociological approach stresses social relevance, social commitment and contemporaneity of the thematic substance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the novel *Viajero* the different forms of diaspora or exiles experienced by Filipinos are diaspora with a cause, diaspora as escapist, diaspora-silent at home and diaspora of self. Diasporas according to Bhabha (1994) refer to gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refugees; gathering on the edge of foreign cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafes of city centers; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues or in the uncanny fluency of author's language, gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment of other world lived restoratively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present.

In the novel *Viajero*, diaspora with a cause is a kind of exile where a person moves away from home and country to represent the plight of the Filipinos to the Spanish government since the Philippines is a colony of Spain. Vandemeyer (1967) stated that after Miguel Lopez de Legaspi's landing in Cebu in 1565, the Philippines became a part of the Spanish empire for over three hundred years. Multiple strategies were utilized by Spain in order to fully colonize and claim the Philippines as their own.

Once Spain claimed the Philippines as a colony, it began to use the islands as a stepping stone for trade between Spain, Mexico, and the Far East, mainly China (Skowronek 1998). The Philippines under the control of Spain suffered many abuses committed by the corrupt Spanish officials. One chief source of abuse is the *encomienda* system. By this system, pieces of territory, with their inhabitants and resources, were granted by the Spanish king to the colonizers as a reward for services to the Crown and the *encomenderos* ruled like the feudal lords of Medieval Europe and exploited their territories to the limit where they abused, overtaxed, cheated, and practically enslaved the Filipinos (Goodlight, 2010).

In the novel, diaspora with a cause is best represented by the two Philippine heroes in the likes of Rizal and Marcelo H. del Pilar both forerunners of the propaganda movement that awakened the Filipino people from the

abuses of Spanish colonizers. The Propaganda Movement was a cultural organization formed in 1872 by Filipino expatriates in Europe comprising of the Filipino elite called "ilustrados", exiled liberals and students attending Europe's universities gravitated to the movement (Geni.com Website, 2018). As narrated in the novel, Buddy the leading protagonist, a Filipino American, who is pursuing his graduate studies in Spain happened to talk to Father Jack, a lanky young Jesuit American scholar saying that:

...Of the exiles in Spain, Rizal was the most important. He was also acknowledged leader, the renaissance man—a medical doctor, a poet, a novelist, a scholar, a painter, and sculptor. He dominated the exile community in Europe. His family in Calamba, Laguna had difficulties with the Dominican friars who owned the hacienda where the Rizal's lived. Rizal had encouraged them to organize, to fight the friars and bring their case to Spain itself. He had argued that if Filipinas was indeed a part of Spain, then the Spanish courts should have a say on matters such as this (pp103-104).

The Spaniards were tyrants to the Filipinos whom they called the Indios. The Filipinos were used as slave to work on the plantations and in the production of goods. They were treated as less than the Europeans and were abused (Philippinesprojectbymarandgabi.weebly.com Website). With the information learned through the readings about Spain, Buddy's formative ideas on history, on exile and revolutionary nationalism became more lucid. He learned that:

...The Spaniards as they themselves have indelibly embossed in history, are cruel people and this cruelty is what they had left, not Catholicism which has become a grievous lie though unknown as such by the multitudes worshipping those wooden images. A lie, too, is the humbling piety because underneath the penances and scented rosaries is the forgotten agony of those they had bludgeoned with the cross. This then is the sum of it all, the distillation of centuries, this legacy of cruelty encrusted in the lands they had plundered, its grand hypocrisy shaping the people, particularly their leaders (pp101-102).

...The Spaniards executed the Indios with it in public. They strapped a man garbed in white, a hood over his head, to a chair with a metal screw clamped on the neck. Then, slowly, the screw was tightened, until the poor man's neck was broken or he was strangled. They left his corpse on the platform the whole day for everyone to see (p245).

As regards to Marcelo H. Del Pilar, he was a Philippine revolutionary propagandist and satirist who tried to marshal the nationalist sentiment of the enlightened Filipino ilustrados, or bourgeoisie, against

Spanish imperialism. Fired by a sense of justice against the abuses of the clergy, Del Pilar attacked bigotry and hypocrisy and defended in court the impoverished victims of racial discrimination (Biography. yourdictionary.com Website, 2010). Del Pilar went to Spain in 1888 to flee from clerical persecution. He refused the assimilationist stand and planned to have an armed revolution with the conviction that insurrection is the last remedy, especially when the people have acquired the belief that peaceful means to secure the remedies for evils prove futile.

Buddy in the novel was fascinated with another exile, self-effacing and who is capable of heroism as well in the person of Marcelo H. Del Pilar. He learned that:

Del Pilar was sent to Spain by the Manila Committee ... to propagandize for reforms in Spain itself, the Spanish government having been changed into a more liberal one, capable of compassion and willing to listen to the complaints of the Indios (p104).

Marcelo H. Del Pilar lived the excruciating pain, the vicious loneliness and disappointment as only del Pilar could feel; indeed, of all exiles in Europe at that time, he was the most tragic figure...Reading the letters of the exiles, particularly del Pilar's, he recognized their anguish... (p105).

These exiles, Rizal and del Pilar, sacrifice their respective lives to help the Filipino people gain their personal and national freedom from Spain.

The second form of exile is the diaspora of escapist. In the context of the study, this refers to a government official who fled the country due to the abuses committed by enriching himself in office, leading a corrupt government whose administration is characterized as infamous due to corruption, extravagance and brutality. In the novel, this form of diaspora is represented by the Marcos regime. Ferdinand Marcos was the president of the Philippines from 1966 to 1986 before fleeing to the United States who declared martial law in 1972 and established an autocratic regime based on widespread favoritism that eventually led to economic stagnation and recurring reports of human rights violations (Biography.com Website, 2018).

Buddy went to Hawaii for a six-month fellowship where he was to look at remnants of the communities set up by the early Filipino Migratory workers. There he met the Filipino senator, Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. who gave talk to Filipino students sponsored convocation. Senator Aquino was the principal opponent of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos who has been in jail since Marcos declared martial law as he was convicted by a military tribunal in Manila of charges of subversion, murder and illegal possession of firearms (Shaw,1977) but was allowed to go to the United States for medical care.

The imposition of martial law by Ferdinand Marcos had forced into exile hundreds who opposed him. Aquino jailed by Marcos, was given permission to leave for the United States for heart surgery and had decided to remain there after surgery to mount a campaign against the Marcos regime...In fact he ((Aquino) said, every Filipino exile who felt passionately about his native land should go back if he could, to help rebuild that nation from the rubble of the Marcos dictatorship (pp184-185).

Buddy in one of his conversation with Senator Aquino was asked

... Just as I have always been? I will be insecure there, afraid even. So much crime in the streets, poverty, oppression, a dictatorship that is vicious, greedy beyond satiation...Ninoy answered that you are arguing precisely for the reasons that you are needed there. Who was it who said, where there is oppression, and injustice, that is my country.

Marcos was forced to flee the country to Hawaii in exile in the midst of mass demonstrations against his rule as he was deserted by his former supporters, where they faced investigation on embezzlement charges (History.com Website, 1986). Buddy in his visit to Manila he witnessed the events unfolded on that fateful day Marcos left the country. He learned that:

...Marcos had fled the country; it was final, absolute- and from that mass of people, a joyous shout as he had never heard before, more than a new year's celebration. Strangers were embracing one another, shaking hands, greeting the world effusively, and it came to him the realization that he had finally seen one great event in history, it had unfolded before him in all its human glory and he was grateful that he was there, and long afterwards he would always remember this moment of freedom, not for himself for he had always been free, but for his people (p223).

Another form of exile is the diaspora silent at home. This is a kind of exile where a person or group of persons have different ideologies and find discontentment, frustration on government or lost trust in the government. In the novel, this is best exemplified by Leo Mercado, a member of the Huk or Hukbalahap movement and his siblings Junior and Namnama who continued the revolutionary traditions, Father Jess, the parish priest of Tondo and his sacristan Pepe Samson. Hukbalahap (Anti-Japanese Army) movement also known as Huk was the culmination of events and internal Philippine conditions that predated World War II by centuries and was rooted in the country's pre-colonial period (History.army.mil Website, 2002). According to Goodwin (2001), Huk movement was a Communist guerrilla movement formed by the peasant farmers of Central Luzon and were

originally formed to fight the Japanese but extended their fight into a rebellion against the Philippine Government.

In the novel, before the assassination of Senator Aquino, he gave Buddy a list of names whom he can make contact with in his visit to the Philippines which include the Mercados, the priest and the sacristan including Prof. E. Hortenzo, a university Professor. When Buddy arrived in the Philippines the prevailing milieu was at the height of martial law of Marcos of which one reason cited for this declaration was the insurgency problem. When Marcos declared Martial Law in the Philippines, specific event that he cited to justify his decision was the Communist insurgency (Martiallawmuseum.ph Website), aside from poverty, lack of education and neglect of government support to the marginalized communities. Buddy after his talk with Father Jess in Tondo, the toughest slum area in Manila, observed while on the cab that:

...All over Tondo, the rot and stink of a bay that had become a cesspool seeped into the airconditioned cab... They skirted the seaside boulevard, past the same dreary amalgam of squatter, houses, children everywhere as if they were spread upon Tondo-blessings upon the land? or curse that would drag the country deeper into the nightmarish swamp of poverty (p195).

He remembered what Father Jess told him that:

...There is so much cussedness in this country, so much hypocrisy and yes so much poverty. The future is very bleak indeed... (p193).

The scenarios during Martial law in the Philippines under Marcos administration is marked with chaos and disorder. He implemented national development projects that prioritized technocratic implementation, leaving many of the poor and working populations out of the process, and thus, from the economic benefits (Bello et al., 1982) of which the displacement, poverty, and hunger out of this development debacle led to mass civil protests which Marcos responded to in the form of state repression (Cachola, 2017). Filipinos resisted the human right abuses of Marcos regime most especially the abductions, tortures, and killings of dissidents, by police or military personnel.

Buddy also went to the university where Professor E. Hortenzo was teaching but he was not able to see him as he was picked up by the military. He asked the Dean where to find him but was only given the reply that:

...It is not as bad as that (dead), although we don't know, of course, what Marcos will do. He was picked up last month here at the university by the military. It was not for the first time, he is in jail, but I really don't know where, I wish I could tell you where his family is, but I don't know (p201).

Further, Father Jess told Buddy in their conversation that:

... This is why there is this call to revolution, this is why this very day hundreds of our young men are in the mountains, in the recesses of this city, waging war. Here in this barrio, when you go out, you do not know who among the people you meet are revolutionaries or sympathizers of the revolution. I am echoing an old friend, a very young man who joined the revolution many years ago-he believed this revolution is not only inevitable but that it is also feasible and righteous (p199).

Buddy was also accompanied by Junior to witness a street protest in Manila. In his letter to his sister Jessie, Buddy said:

...he had experienced his first demonstration-a march from the University of the Philippines all the way to Malacanang, the presidential palace, although they did not reach Malacanang for at Mendiola Bridge, barbed wire and tanks stopped them... It seemed like fun, but it was serious business, for many had been killed precisely for joining these demonstrations... (p208).

Another pressing issue that gained support from the movement is the peasant farmers demand for the implementation of land reform program of the government- a system of land ownership, especially when it involves giving of land to the people who actually farm it and taking it away from people who own large areas for profit (Collinsdictionary.com Website). The government seemed too slow in redistributing the land to the farmers. The peasant farmers went to Malacañang to seek audience to new President Corazon "Cory" Aquino after Marcos exile in Hawaii but she refused to meet them.

...A peasant gathering at Malacañang to force Cory to look at the agrarian problem which she had failed to do although during the election campaign the previous year, she had promised that she would (p241).

Buddy learned from Junior that Cory did not meet the peasant leader which strengthened his belief that land reform under Cory will never be implemented. Instead these farmers gathered at Mendiola for a demonstration unarmed. The farm leaders were asking:

... Why did Cory not want to see them? She had passed on to her agrarian reform minister the duty to look after the peasants' demands, but the minister had not done anything. Where is land reform? Why has Cory betrayed the trust of the people? (242)

In the novel instead of Cory meeting the farmers, soldiers fired at them and many were hit by bullets and been killed.

... The first flurry of shots from the barricade struck the phalanx of demonstrators. The bullets whistled above him and where it struck human flesh, it came as a thud (p243).

These farmers wanted to seek audience to Cory to air their grievances to the government such as the desire of peasants and farmers to acquire the land being tilled by them. However, instead of holding a dialogue, the group marched to Mendiola and as they tried to breach the line of the police several Marines fired killing around twelve of the marchers and injuring thirty -nine (Corazon aquino life. com Website, 2009).

The last form of exile is the diaspora of self. This can be manifested by a person who left the country out of poverty, need to uplift the living condition, to fulfill a dream of having a better life, to trace one's identity or roots and the overseas contract workers. This form of exile is illustrated by the characters of Vladimir, Buddy, and the Filipina prostitutes, the illegal and legal Filipino workers abroad. According to the data from Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) there were 9.5 million to 12.5 million Filipinos currently work or reside abroad which can be translated around 10 to 11 percent of the total Philippine population. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) play a pivotal role in sustaining the Philippine economy (Pinoymoneytalk.com Website, 2017). Though overseas Filipino workers have become the pillar of the economy and referred to as the backbone of the new global force, the reality is they work abroad to escape crushing poverty and unemployment and lack of opportunities at home (Paddock, 2006).

In the novel, Buddy met Vladimir, a Filipino cook who worked in a restaurant in Japan and whose father is a schoolteacher who had seen a lot of sufferings and whose mother is selling vegetables in the market. Vladimir related to Buddy that:

... I would like to continue earning good money so that I can fulfill my obligations to my parents, to buy back the land sold, to see to it that they will not be hungry, that they will grow old happy in the thought that I have been a filial son (p175).

These Filipinos who have gone abroad to work with the hope and dream of having a better life experienced varied forms of abuses or maltreatment from their employers aside from the harsh conditions that they've been exposed to. Vladimir related to Buddy his personal experiences as an overseas worker. Prior to going to Japan Vladimir worked as cooked in an ocean-going vessel owned by a Filipino but flying under the Panama flag. While their ship was in Singapore to load some cargo for a week, Buddy was brought by his Chief cook in Orchard Plaza to meet his Filipina girlfriend. Buddy was surprised to what he saw.

... Hundreds of Filipino women on the sidewalk, everywhere talking and exchanging gossip, Orly, the cook, was forty years old ,and his girlfriend was from

Bontoc, a lovely enough girl, with broad hips and a dimple (p165).

It was from the girl introduced to him as Orly's girlfriend from Baguio where he learned the experiences of women working in Singapore as domestics.

...It was also from her that I learned for the first time of the life of women domestics in Singapore. There were also construction workers, and they live on the sites, sleeping on the floor, atop piles of building materials. Tough life, but at least they were earning more money (p166).

Filipino workers in Singapore most especially those working as domestic helpers and construction workers were treated badly in terms of their living conditions and prone to abuse by their employers. According to Kenneth Roth, executive Director of Human Rights Watch based in Singapore said that many domestic workers labor without pay for months, settle debts to employment agencies, work long hours seven days a week, or are confined to their workplace. Women migrant domestic workers in Singapore suffer grave abuses including physical and sexual violence, food deprivation, and confinement in the workplace and at least 147 migrant domestic workers have died from workplace accidents or suicide since 1999, most by jumping or falling from residential buildings (Hrw. org. news. com Website, 2005). There is also a growing complaint of unpaid wages.

Then Vladimir related to Buddy that they also went to Hongkong as their next port of destination where Orly had another girlfriend waiting for him. Vladimir was introduced to another girl from Bacolod, a sweet Ilonga, where he learned that:

...Like our girls in Singapore, I heard the same stories, most of the time of ill treatment, of masters of the house who tried to rape them, and the generally bad conditions under which they worked (p166).

The lives of Filipino women domestics in Singapore and Hongkong were the same. They share the same stories of ill-treatment, poor living conditions, and human right abuses. Domestic helpers in Hongkong were subjected to the so-called live-in requirement- a government policy requiring helpers to live with their employers in their home which make them vulnerable to abuse such as long working hours, lack of sleep and proper resting space, and poor diet as a result of the live-in arrangement (Phuketnews easy branches. com Website, 2018).

The same fate happened to Filipinos working in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Vladimir lamented to Buddy stating that:

... In Saudi and Kuwait, many of our women suffered this fate; others were battered, and those who couldn't

take it often lost their minds. To be in Saudi Arabia is to be in the middle ages... (p168).

All over the world, thousands of women continued to be lured to Saudi Arabia with the promise of steady jobs only to instead be tortured and raped by their employers where majority of the cases were those who have left their home countries to work as maids in Saudi and been abused have not been paid for their work (News.com.au Website). Passports of these domestic workers once they arrived were also taken by their employers. Hugh Tomlinson of Kuwait Times wrote that in an alley behind the Philippines Embassy in Kuwait a group of women in conversation focuses on how soon they can return home, and they are among hundreds of housemaids who have fled lives of modern-day slavery in Kuwait and taken refuge from abusive employers in their national embassies.

These women according to Richard Paddock of Los Angeles Times were the runaway Filipino maids who arrived there desperate, bruised, hungry and penniless who sacrifice their own lives and endure years of loneliness for the sake of supporting their families as they suffer beatings and sexual abuse from their employers. In countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, these maids are jailed for running away. Filipino women working overseas have been raped and sexually abused and harassed while some workers have been forced to work in slave-like conditions (Hays, 2008).

This is also true to Dubai. Many Filipinos are also working there to earn a living and to send money to their families in the Philippines. Vladimir told Buddy that there was a time he worked at a new hotel in Dubai. There he observed that:

...Filipino women all over Dubai, in the shops as salesclerks, in the hotels as waitresses and even as masseuses. The airport tax free shop in Dhuhai is manned completely by Filipinas, it is like shopping in Makati (p169).

Vladimir narrated to Buddy that Filipinos can be found anywhere in the world bringing with them their hopes and dreams of better life like those prostitutes he met in Germany when their ship docked. In a famous prostitution district in Hamburg, Buddy and the radio operator met two Filipino heavily make-up girls. They were very happy to see them to get some news about home. Buddy was left with the girl from Pampanga and in the midst of the conversation as Filipinos...

...away from home, stricken with homesickness, wanting to go back, but to what? The poverty, the filth and the corruption of the homeland? No, it is better in Hamburg, and certainly better, too in the hot steamy galley of a Norwegian ship... (p170).

This clearly shows that though there is longing on the part of the exiles to go back home but there are also some factors which prevented them to endure such longing for homeland. It is very vivid in their memory that they would rather live through hardship, loneliness, alienation rather than stay in one's country marred with so much poverty, corruption, and depravity.

Vladimir also happened to visit Germany where a social center was set up and managed by a civic minded Filipina together with a German priest where Filipina mail to order brides visited the center with their mestizo children. He also told Buddy that:

...Where else are the Filipinos working? In the frozen tundras of Alaska, in the pampas of Argentina, in the mines of Africa, in the North and South Poles- Filipinos are there, and if the Russians will open up Siberia to Filipino workers, there will be willing to suffer that arctic cold. All over the world, all over the world! Mail -order brides in Scandinavia in Australia, where our poor women marry not for love but for money, men who are drop-outs, outcasts in their own society. Illegals in Italy, in Switzerland, and yet more maids in London. It is difficult now for Filipinos to travel with their brown passports- everywhere, they are suspect. In Sydney where I went to meet my ship, I was searched like I was a smuggler, all my clothes, pockets, all my things, my airline ticket, my seaman's papers. And why not? TNT's that is what most Filipino travelers have become, "takbo ng takbo," always running away from a land that denies them honor, always running, just as I am running now (p171).

Indeed, exiles of Filipinos are evident throughout in search for better life and future. In various countries all over the world Filipinos are deployed every year depending on the kind of services offered based on their skills. Their motivation and driving force to face the adversities in life is the promise of a better life and better future. All of these for the sake of subsistence, for decent meals to fill the hungry stomachs back home, for the support their own country could not provide for them. For the most part, the Filipino diaspora is not just a trend that has to be adapted as a desperate alternative to earn a living and to sustain a family, far from it the diaspora is an ugly reality disguised under the blinding promise of the American dream (Wandersummer.wordpress.com Website, 2017).

But the case of Buddy is a different thing. He is an American citizen but with a Filipino dream. Buddy reflected on what Vladimir shared to him and began questioning about himself. What about him? Though financially and materially secured aside from being successful in his career, he could not find meaning in his life, no happiness, only emptiness and longing to search

for his true self and his roots as he was an orphan who was adopted by an American captain and was brought to the United States in 1945. He best compared himself to that of Marcelo del Pilar when he read his letters of exiles where he recognized...

...their anguish, the stringent pull of memory that Buddy himself felt for those fractured images of his early childhood (p105).

Buddy's observations to all the people whom he had contact with, the poverty and helplessness of the farmers in the mountain who were devoid of government attention and support, corruptions everywhere led him to be involved in the underground movement. In his conversation with Pepe Samson, a learned and practical man, Buddy asked him:

...have you ever thought about who you are, where you are going-you know, that question about identity which so many are asking? I ask because, if you must know, this is one reason why I have returned (p 232).

It is now clear to Buddy his reason for coming back to his country. His getting involved to something that would give meaning to his life. Pepe told Buddy:

...What is identity to these people (villagers), Buddy? This is their life, and you may ask, is it really worth living? But they will go on, because we have something to live for (p238).

His involvement to the day to day lives of the farmers, sympathize with their hardship, and cry for injustice gave point of realization to Buddy to go out in his comfort zone and help.

...In that moment, Salvador dela Raza realized what it was all about, that he had really shut himself off in some permeable cocoon, some comfortable prison, and now he must break free (p238).

In the conversation of Buddy with her sister Jessie who visited her in the mountain, he explained to her...

...what had happened in the Philippines these many years, how the peasants had always been exploited and the land despoiled. The Mountain had become a redoubt of faith for those who believed there was salvation still (p268).

In the end Buddy felt satisfaction in his newfound life. There is fulfillment in him as he finally found peace in his abode, the country he longed to live, the place he called home. In a sense, that is the meaning of life.

...All of us, we do a lot of wandering, but in the end we have to return to where we came from. In a sense, that is what life is all about. An endless searching. Some find what we are looking for, others are destined to drift in space, rootless. Didn't you get what you wanted? Finally? And I-this! Aren't we both lucky? (p273)

The above scenarios showed that no matter how difficult are the situations faced by Filipino migrants, they

are resilient as their hopes in attaining better lives and future give them strength and determination. At the end of their journey in life, there will come a time for them to reflect that going back at home to one's country is happiness and fulfillment.

The diaspora of Filipinos in the above scenarios had varied reasons for leaving the country. First and foremost love of one's country which prompt a person to go on exile to represent a country in an international arena to alleviate poverty, improve living condition, weed out human rights abuses and corruption like the case of Rizal and Marcelo del Pilar, two Philippine heroes. In Rizal's letters to his relatives and for his country before he left Hongkong for Manila on June 20, 1892 he clearly spoke of his love for his family and the Philippines, that his death was a way to liberate them from their miseries, and his country will be liberated from the oppressors that have stayed in his country for much too long (Kaspil123. Wordpress.com Website).

The other reason for being exiled is that of leaving the homeland because of the uprising that happened against a dictator ruler who plundered the wealth of the country, commit abuses and atrocities to its citizens like the Marcos regime. Ferdinand E. Marcos, an autocratic leader who imposed martial law in his homeland from 1972 to 1981 ruled the Philippines for 20 years until he was ousted in 1986, (Gross, 1989). Known for running a corrupt, undemocratic regime, Ferdinand Marcos was the president of the Philippines from 1966 to 1986 before fleeing to the United States who went into exile where they took with them a reported \$15 million (Biography.com. Website, 2018). Diaspora silent at home does not necessarily mean leaving from one's country but can also mean being a non-conformist in the norms or practices in society due to differed ideologies. Their sympathy is accorded to the marginalized sectors and those who are oppressed as government often neglect them. The reason for their exile is that they believed that government had many lapses and wrongdoings and they serve as watchdog of the government against their abuses and espouse rallies, street demonstrations or revolution in the extreme cases like the Huk movement in the novel and the communist insurgents.

According to Dugdale (2006) the communist insurgency in the 1990s has its roots in the Huk rebellion and as the remains of the Huk helped form the military wing of the communist, the NPA in the 1960's. Kessler (1989) on the other explained that peasant revolt is historically endemic to the Philippines despite the differing nature of the insurrections; it is the relationship between the peasants, the elite and the military that remains the main cause of the unrest. The insurgency problem continues to linger on even at the end of

Marcos regime unless there are changes in the Philippine social, economic and political structure.

The diaspora of self is pictured in varied ways in the novel like characters leaving the country in search for better opportunities, employment, and greener pasture legally or illegally which the government failed to provide them. The poverty they experienced in the country drive them to go on self-exile and dream of attaining better life. There are several reasons cited why Filipinos want to leave their country and these include having higher income and salary, the high unemployment rate in the Philippines, unstable economic condition, pressure from the family and peer influence, enhance career and professional marketability globally, discrimination experienced when applying jobs locally, opportunity to travel and experience abroad, government supports on OFWs, lack of public support for local entrepreneurs, it's their personal dream since childhood and it's the trend now (Natividad, 2012). Despite the many documented reports of abuses committed to Filipino migrants, these do not discourage them to leave the country to have a totally different life even to the point of using their entire savings or loan money as they have already made up their minds of having and hoping a better life and future. Another form of diaspora of self is the search for identity or sense of belongingness. No matter how successful a person is in a foreign land as he lives there throughout his life, it is hidden deep inside his heart that longings to be with his countrymen, to be in his birthplace, to be at home in his native land.

These experiences of Filipino exiles depicted in the novels will provide a glimpse on the kind of life expatriates had which will serve as basis of government for enhancing policies and laws protecting migrant workers. Further, lived experiences of Filipino exiles will help design trainings, seminars, orientation of migrant workers for them to be prepared in working in another country. These can also help improve the services offered to them by government agencies. Government may also give prospective migrant workers skills training for them to be equipped with necessary working skills. Through these lived experiences concerned government agencies can review benefits given to migrant workers and can provide them with vital information regarding legal help and support most especially the distressed workers. These will also serve as an eye opener for all migrant workers that working abroad needs preparation not only physical but also mental, emotional and intellectual aspect.

IV. CONCLUSION

Literature reflects realities in society. The events of day to day lives of people are captured in literature. Peoples' experiences mirrored in literature give lessons and

insights to readers like the novel of F. Sionel Jose's *Viajero*. Different forms of diaspora or exiles in the novel are vividly pictured through experiences of Filipinos working abroad. These forms include diaspora with a cause, diaspora as escapists, diaspora silent at home and diaspora of self. Diaspora with a cause is a form of exile where the person who leaves the country is with a noble intent. One does sacrifice for the benefit of many like representing the country to air grievances; abuses committed and espouse change for the good of the country. Diaspora as escapists is another form of exile where the person involved fled out of the country because of the wrongdoings committed to its constituents while diaspora silent at home is a form of exile where a person becomes discontented, frustrated due to injustices experienced and loss of trust to the government due to corruption, and unfairness as well as being neglected in terms of support and care. Diaspora of self is a manifestation of a person who leaves the country full of dreams and hopes of attaining better life and future but experienced varied forms of hardships and abuses. That longingness to be back home is in the hearts of exiles and once fulfillment of dreams is attained, coming back is a blissful respite. Many Filipinos opted to go on exiles to escape poverty, filth and corruption in the country. For them they can endure loneliness, harsh environment, poor living condition in another country for as long as they can send money for the subsistence of their family who are left behind. The lived experiences of Filipino diasporas can serve as a reference of all migrant workers on the kind of life they had for them to be prepared in terms of their physical, mental, emotional intellectual aspect in pursuing their dreams of better life and future and for government agencies to enrich, expand policies and laws protecting human rights of overseas workers and to provide them with all the support and legal assistance..

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author acknowledges the support provided by the Batangas State University for the completion of this manuscript and Dr. Francisco M. Heralde III for the editorial assistance.

REFERENCES

- [1] Kleckner, Joe. 2017. 32 P.T. Barnum Quotes on Succeeding life. Retrieved from: <https://addicted2success.Com/qoutes/32-p-t-barnum-qoutes-on-succeeding-in-life>.
- [2] Theodysseyonline.com Website. Retrieved from: <https://www.theodyssey.com/7-reasons-why-literature-is-so-important>.
- [3] Quora.com Website. Significance of Literature. Retrieved from: <https://www.quora.Com/What-is-the-significance-of-literature-in-our-life>.
- [4] Buzzle.com Website. 2010. Importance of Literature. Retrieved from: <https://www.buzzle.Com/articles/importance-of-literature.html>.
- [5] Kennedy, X.J. 1993. *Literature, An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company
- [6] Reeve, Clara. 1975. *The Teaching of Literature*. New York: American Book Company
- [7] Shodhganga.inflibnet. Website. An Introduction to Diaspora Studies. Retrieved from: http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/152777/6/06_chapter%201.pdf
- [8] Rushdie, Salman. 1991. *Imaginary Homelands*. London: Granta Books and Penguin India.
- [9] Zang, Benzi. "Identity in Diaspora and Diaspora in Writing: the poetics of cultural transrelation." *Journal of International Studies*. Vol. 21, No-1, 2000
- [10] Delmendo, Sharon. 2005. *The Star-entangled Banner: One Hundred Years of America in the Philippines*. University of the Philippines Press, Diliman, Quezon City.
- [11] Galdon, Joseph A. 1972. "Introduction" *Philippine Fiction: Essays from Philippine Studies*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- [12] Khan, Umair. 2015. *Human Migration Definition Reasons and Examples/ Why People Migrate*. Retrieved from: <http://www.studylecturenotes.com/basics-of-sociology/human-migration-definition-reasons-and-examples-%7C-why-people-migrate>.
- [13] Wood, Andrew. 2007. *Philippines: The Migration Problem*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jurist.org/datetime/2007/07/philippines-migration-problem.php>
- [14] Asis, Maruja M.B. 2006. *The Philippines Culture of Migration*. Retrieved from: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/philippines-culture-migration>.
- [15] Centerformigrantadvocacy.com Website. *Philippine Migration*. Retrieved from: <https://centerformigrantadvocacy.com/philippine-migration>
- [16] Jose, Sionil F. 1993. *Viajero*. Solidaridad Publishing House. Ermita, Manila, Philippines
- [17] Uml.edu/-wilmarthp.com Website, 2004. *Content Analysis*. Retrieved from: <http://www.uml.edu/-wilmarthp/mrpc-web-resources/content-analysis>.
- [18] Stephens, John. 2015. *International Research in Children's Literature*. Vol. 8 Issue I. Edinburgh University Press.

- [19] Bautista, Ma. Lourdes and Stella P. Go.1993. Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods. Manila: De La Salle University Press.
- [20] Kennedy, J. and Dana Gioia.2016. Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama. Pearson
- [21] Bhabha, Homi. 1994. Location of Culture. London: Routledge, 1994.
- [22] Vandermeer, Canute 1967 Population Patterns on the Island of Cebu, the Philippines 1500 to 1900. Annals of the Association of American Geographers 57: 315-337.
- [23] Skowronek, Russell K. 1998 The Spanish Philippines: Archaeological Perspectives on Colonial Economics and Society. International Journal of Historical Archaeology 2: 45-71.
- [24] Goodlight, Athena 2010. Spanish Era in the Philippines. Retrieved from: <https://learning.knoji.com/the-spanish-era-in-the-philippines/>
- [25] Geni.com Website, 2018. Members of the Propaganda Movement. Retrieved from: <https://www.geni.com/projects/Members-of-the-Propaganda-Movement/13919>
- [26] Philippinesprojectbymarandgabi.weebly.com Website. Spanish Colonization. Retrieved from: <https://philippinesprojectbymarandgabi.weebly.com/spanish-colonization.html>
- [27] Biography. yourdictionary.com Website, 2010. Marcelo H. del Pilar Facts. Retrieved from: <http://biography.yourdictionary.com/marcelo-hilario-del-pilar>.
- [28] Biography.com Website, 2018. Ferdinand Marcos Biography. Retrieved from: <https://www.biography.com/people/ferdinand-marcos-9398625>.
- [29] Shaw, Terri, 1977. Marcos Opponents Sentenced to Death. Retrieved from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1977/11/26/marcos-opponents-sentenced-to-death/8131f09b-57e0-4bf1-9931-b255cb4f8951/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.2d3e6cdc88f4.
- [30] History.com Website, 1986. Marcos Flees the Philippines. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/marcos-flees-the-philippines>.
- [31] History.army.mil Website, 2002. The evolution of the Hukbalahap Movement. Retrieved from: <https://history.army.mil/books/coldwar/huk/ch1.htm>
- [32] Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.119, ISBN 0-521-62948-9, ISBN
- [33] Martial law museum.ph Website. The Night of the declaration. Retrieved from: <https://martiallawmuseum.ph/magalar/442>
- [34] Bello, Walden, David Kinley and others. 1982. *Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines*. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy.
- [35] Cachola, Ellen-Rae,2017. The haunting of martial Law: Records from Marcos Regime. Retrieved from: <https://library.law.hawaii.edu/2017/09/07/the-haunting-of-martial-law-records-from-the-marcos-regime/>.
- [36] Collinsdictionary.com Website www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/land-reform.
- [37] Corazonaquinolife.com Website, 2009 <http://corazonaquinolife.blogspot.com/2009/07/corys-agrarian-reform.html>.
- [38] Pinoymoneytalk.com Website, 2017. <https://www.pinoymoneytalk.com/ofw-population-country-age-sex-work-type>.
- [39] Paddock, Richard C. Los Angeles Times, April 20, 2006
- [40] Hrw.org.news.com Website, 2005.Singapore: Domestic Workers Suffer Grave Abuses. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/singapore-domestic-workers-suffer-grave-abuses>.
- [41] Phuketnews easy branches.com Website, 2018 Hongkong's Domestic Workers Share Stories of ill-treatment, poor living Conditions, and Rights abuses. Retrieved from: <https://phuketnews.easybranches.com/story/hong-kong-s-domestic-workers-share-stories-of-ill-treatment-poor-living-conditions-and-rights-abuses-202057>.
- [42] News.com.au Website. Employers from hell: Domestic workers tortured by their 'masters' Retrieved from: <https://www.news.com.au/world/middle-east/employers-from-hell-domestic-workers-tortured-by-their-masters/news-story/55b5173abfe5171b2973c478ce2704d3>.
- [43] Hays, Jeffrey. 2008. Abuse and Problems Suffered by Overseas Filipino Workers. Retrieved from: http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Philippines/sub5_6g/entry-3921.html.
- [44] Wandersummer.wordpress.com Website, 2017. Book Review: Embarking on a Sojourn through F. Sionil Jose's Viajero Retrieved from: <https://wandersummer.wordpress.com/2017/01/18/book-review-embarking-on-a-sojourn-through-f-sionil-joses-viajero/>.

- [45] Kaspil123.Wordpress.com Website. Rizal: A Product of His Own Era. <https://kaspil123.wordpress.com/binan/>.
- [46] Gross, Jane. 1989. Ferdinand Marcos, Ousted Leader of Philippines, Dies at 72 in Exile. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/obituaries/ferdinand-marcos-ousted-leader-of-philippines-dies-at-72-in-exile.htm>.
- [47] Biography. com. Website, 2018. Ferdinand Marcos Biography. Retrieved from: <https://www.biography.com/people/ferdinand-marcos-9398625>.
- [48] Dugdale-Pointon, TPD 2006. Insurgency in the Philippines, <http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars-philippine.html>.
- [49] Kessler, Richard J. 1989. Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines.
- [50] Natividad, Fritz. 2012. 11 Reasons why Filipinos Want to Work Abroad. Retrieved from: <https://businesstips.ph/reasons-why-filipinos-want-to-work-abroad/>