
Five Filipino Novels in English Depicting Socio-Political Realities Evoke Human Transformations

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Abstract: In the world of literature, Henry James stated that novel is history. This is so because novels are written by authors gathering their plot agenda from prevailing socio-political realities in particular time points in history. This study aims to present a review of five Filipino novels in English as to how they exemplify the fictive realities of the Marcosian era and provides a synthesis of the philosophical learnings derived from them. The novels included are: *Fortress in the Plaza* by Linda Ty-Casper, *Bamboo in the Wind* by Azucena Grajo Uranka, *Killing Time in a Warm Place* by Jose Y. Dalisay, Jr., *Viajero* by F. Sionil Jose and *Dream Eden* by Linda Ty-Casper. Descriptive method was employed in looking into portrayals of realities and characterizations of personalities in the novels, following a sociological, psychological and philosophical approach in literary criticism. Results showed that sociological dualism, political ferment and economic stagnation were among the socio-political milieu that led to the declaration of Martial law in the Philippines. These realities were reflected in the different dimensions such as the socio-political, the psychological and the philosophical dimensions. While the novels capture the thoughts and aspirations of the authors, these also reveal the human transformations undergone by the characters that arise from their experiences of the Marcosian era. These human transformations include the evolvement of the philosophical constructs of human dignification and that of being a man for others.

Keywords: Filipino Novels in English, Socio-Political Realities, Marcosian Era, Human Transformation

1. Introduction

A novel is one of the many forms of prose narrative that contained two basic elements: a story and a storyteller [1]. Historically, it originated in the medieval and early modern romance and following the tradition of the Italian “novella”, it features fictional characters and events in a sequential story format [1, 2]. A novel differs from a romance through its realistic treatment of life and manners. It differs from history through its fictional nature geared towards showcasing the qualities of literature and as an art [3]. While history is written to present factual events that transpired in the past geared towards promoting a public discussion regarding historical responsibilities, a novel itself can deal with history [2, 4]. It would differ though from history through the timeless value it would have in the hands of private readers that consider it as a work of art. This literary value necessitates the possession of the “eternal qualities” of art, the “deeper meaning” as revealed through the interpretation

of its critics and not a mere “historical forgery” through the revelation of the design of its author [2].

Among the nineteenth century novelist, it was Henry James, who began applying the technique of point-of-view narration in his writings where “the minds of his characters were established as the focal points of interest of the novel” [1]. In his works, the reader’s knowledge of events and characters is bounded by the limitations of the characters or central consciousness. In the “The Art of Fiction”, one could notice how he treats novels as directly related to life itself. Henry James thinks that “novel is history so that like historians one should look at the truth in the novel that is hand in hand with life itself” [5]. He further claims that, “A novel is in its broadest definition a personal impression of life; that to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression... The form ..., is to be appreciated after the fact; when the author’s

choice has been made, his standard has been indicated; then one can follow lines and directions and compare tones” [5]. Many writers have followed James’ examples and experimented on shifting the focus of the novel “further inward to examine human consciousness” [1]. These writers [e.g., Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and William Faulkner] employed a kind of narration involving a stream of consciousness, in order to establish “the flow of consciousness.” While the novel continues to become popular in the present time, its focus has shifted from a realistic perspective to the more expansive form incorporating different fictional modes. The three types of fictional mode namely: the science fiction, social, and historical novel, have emerged with clear objectives “to be didactic, to instruct readers in the necessity for changing their morality, their lives, and the institutions of society” [1].

Filipino novels in English are not exempted from this literary trend. In fact, it was at a time in Philippine history when socio-political realities have brought much human suffering that some of these novels were born out of the creative spirit of Filipino writers perhaps as a way to convey their aspiration for a better way of life. In the Philippines, it was the Marcosian era that involved the most widespread engagement of the national consciousness and evoked the deepest impression that triggered the fruition of these creative works in a way as a realistic documentation of human experiences which could have been lost by the factual narration of history. The examples of these novels are: *Fortress in the Plaza* by Linda Ty-Casper [6], *Bamboo in the Wind* by Azucena Grajo Uranza [7], *Killing Time in a Warm Place* by Jose Y. Dalisay, Jr. [8], *Viajero* by F. Sionil Jose [9] and *Dream Eden* by Linda Ty-Casper [10]. It is in these narrative materials that this study is aimed at. This study attempts to come up an epoch in Philippine history out of the realities of the Marcosian era as reflected in five selected Filipino novels in English. This study specifically would like to determine: 1) the realities that lead to the declaration of martial law, 2) capture the realities presented in the five novels in terms of socio-political, psychological and philosophical dimensions, and 3) identify the human transformation evolved out of the realities of the Marcosian era.

This study would be particularly relevant with the advent of the new leadership in the Philippines (i.e., the Duterte administration), where once again, the Filipinos have a taste of Martial Law [11]. The declaration of Martial law in Mindanao in May 23, 2017 created a sense of jitters, fear and reminders to the population of what they have experienced in the Marcosian era [12, 13]. Thus, comparisons of the Duterte martial law and the Marcos martial law have emerged [14, 15]. It would be beneficial to revisit the historical consciousness of martial law captured in the Filipino novels and how these stories and learning would once again unfold in the current state of the Philippines [13]. It would be worthwhile to observe whether such progression in human spirit as reflected in the characters would find prophetic similarities in the present time [13, 14].

2. Methods

2.1. Research Method

The study made use of descriptive method in looking into portrayals of realities and characterizations of personalities in the novels. This involved content analysis which is a systematic technique in analysing message content and message handling. The nature of the situation as it existed in the novels was studied and the causes of particular phenomena are explored. The novels were examined on the assumption that a novel of socio-political nature is a historical document in terms of setting, characterization, and subject matter.

2.2. Materials for Criticism

Five Philippine novels, three full-length novels and two novellas in English constituted the primary sources of the study. These novels were: *Fortress in the Plaza* by Linda Ty-Casper, *Bamboo in the Wind* by Azucena Grajo Uranza, *Killing Time in a Warm Place* by Jose Y. Dalisay, Jr., *Viajero* by F. Sionil Jose and *Dream Eden* by Linda Ty-Casper.

2.3. Treatment of Materials

The novels were analysed and interpreted using the three approaches in literary criticism: the sociological, psychological and the philosophical approach following the works of Lualhati, 1996 [16]; Sicat, 1994 [17]; and Dechosa, 1999 [18]. The sociological approach considered 1) the experiential, 2) the analytic, and 3) the contextual phases. The psychological approach involved the analysis of behavior and/or reactions and motives of the main and some supporting characters in the novels. This approach most often used the Freudian psychoanalytic theory in character delineation. The philosophical approach followed the moral or humanistic approach where the nature of man was made central to literature. This approach required the literary work to present man as essentially rational, endowed with intellect and free will, and not misrepresent man’s true nature as human being.

3. Results and Discussion

The realities as depicted in the five novels are presented in Table 1. The 1960s until the 1970s were years of pain for the Filipinos which led to the declaration of Martial Law [19, 20]. Sociological dualism was a common characteristic of the realities in the pre-Martial law Philippine society [20]. This is represented as a dichotomy of two distinguishable sectors during the sixties onwards. In dramatic strokes, there was a small but significant sector that derived its livelihood by controlling much of the nation’s resources and heading the country’s public and private bureaucracies. This sector includes the government, the business leaders and other influential individuals. Amidst the glittering materialism of this upper society are the rest of the population who are relatively disadvantaged. These include the rural people; the

upland farmers, the lowland tenant farmers, loggers, fishermen and workers in similar occupation that demanded physical toil. These people shared a common characteristic of poverty. The root of this poverty can be traced back in the past when cultural dichotomy emerged in this society. It had its origins in the early Spanish period when the colonizers were considered to be superiors, and the brown people- the *indios*, were treated as the conquered inferiors. When the Americans came after the Spanish war, much as they introduced education as a pillar of democracy, a lot of the pattern remained the same as they saw a clear majority of

ignorant people that were easily led and manipulated by a comparatively few individuals. The mestizo culture (i.e., the seemingly idolatrous appreciation of the cultural superiority of Caucasian races by the locals) had bled dry the identity and confidence of the native Filipino who had been trained to be loyal, submissive and tamed, with too much dependence on his patron for survival. Thus, the dichotomy never ceased that even the Filipino institution patterned after the American system was a “feed mill” for stratification. Factionalism was widely practiced, followed by patron-client relationship that produced an inefficient system of society.

Table 1. Realities of the Marcosian era as captured in five Philippine novels in English.

| Title of Novel | Sample realities depicted in the novels |
|------------------------------|---|
| Fortress in the Plaza | ...Life of a small town politician which led to a grenade throwing incident parallel with the August 21, 1972 Plaza Miranda bombing as recorded in history. ...images of pre-martial law days especially those days when lives were deemed short and bullets easily tore lives apart. ...The end comes as an EXPLOSION, literally. |
| Bamboo in the Wind | <i>Ang Pilipino raw ay parang kawayan,</i> <i>Sa bagyo 'y yumuyuko, Ngunit di nabubuwal</i> <i>Sa aking mga kababayang minamahal at hinahangaan,</i> <i>Silang mga kawayang matitibay sa unos</i> <i>Sa kanila ko inihahandog itong aking abang kwento</i> |
| Killing Time in a Warm Place | ...a novel about growing up in the Philippines during the Marcos years. ...Its main character was Noel Bulaong, an 18-year-old activist who killed time in prison as he was apprehended by the military. ...The story portrayed Noel on a process of paradigm shift from activist to apathetic non-participative citizen. ...This was brought about by his imprisonment. ... Dalisay himself was imprisoned for seven months in 1973 which could have given him the experience of how it was in a “killing place” |
| Viajero | ...reflects the historical diaspora of the Filipino. ...In this novel he pursues the theme of Filipinos continually searching for social justice and moral order. ... the characters in Viajero succumbed to corruption and despair. ...verbalization of the words: No freedom in cheating Return stolen wealth to the country. |
| Dream Eden | ...There were blunderings which made a cult of extravagance of the First Couple: If it's true that Marcos and Imelda bought buildings in New York from money stolen from the government, they would need a hotter hell. ...corruption was documented in a dialogue between Benhur and Osong who spoke of Evelio Javier who fought corruption. |

The *Hukbalahap*, a group of Filipino protesters were depicted to rise up to protest the division between the rich and the poor without many changes in the *status quo* [19]. Thus, the widening gap solidifies a much deeper cleavage that was awaiting a triggering event for a potential class struggle.

Another characteristic of the realities in the pre-Martial law Philippine society was political ferment wherein, during those times in the nineteen-sixties, politics had taken the upper hand among the people with “gold, guns and goons” ruling over the silent majority. It was Benigno Aquino Sr. who had seen the political boil of the country which was about to rupture and throw its rotten pus of militarization, corruption and violence. Ferdinand Marcos himself made this observation in his inaugural address; “*The Filipino, it seems, has lost his soul, his dignity and his courage. The people have come to a point of despair....and have ceased to value order (Marcos, 1965)*” [21]. There was a spread of New People’s Army (NPA) insurgency brought by the problems of tenancy and abuse. There was also the prevalence of student demonstrations, teach-ins, and walkouts and rallies in those

days. In August 21, 1971, during a Liberal Party rally at the Plaza Miranda, bombs were exploded purportedly initiated by the communists and was considered the driving force for the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*.

Economic stagnation was another characteristic of the realities in the pre Martial-law Philippine society. During the sixties, the economy was in shambles. Crony capitalism was prevalent and created deleterious effects to the Philippine economy. Marcos wrestled power from the Chinese on the premise that the economy was largely in the hands of Chinese elements. The government established government-mandated monopolies which adversely affected millions of farmers and their dependents. By 1969, the Philippines faced public and private foreign debts of US\$1.6 billion. The assistance sought from the World Bank and the IMF necessitated the devaluation of peso to more than 60% against the US dollar and resulted to domestic inflation [19, 20].

Thus, under these three socio-political milieus, Marcos declared Martial law or Proclamation 1081. To his mind, it was to be a historical destiny and in his fighting faith,

believed a revolution was necessary as an instrument for individual and social change and that its end is the advancement of human freedom. He cited in his paper, *Today's Revolution: Democracy* (1971) to quote: "I believe that while we have utilized the Presidential power to dismantle the bloody revolution and its rightist communists and other apparatus, we must not fail our people: we must replace the bloody revolution with the authentic revolution – liberal, constitutional and peaceful" [22].

A dissection of these realities in terms of socio-political, psychological and philosophical dimensions was done through identification of relevant support quotes derived from the text and the impressions they indicate.

3.1. *Fortress in the Plaza* by Linda Ty-Casper

In the socio-political dimension, three realities were noted as salient themes of the era, namely social apathy, extreme poverty and militarization. The support quote, "Your taty used to vote but I never did. What's the use? All politicians are crooks. Once they get into office they become crooks, looking out only for themselves. They don't fool me. As soon as they are voted in, they forget all their promises..." provides an impression of the growing restlessness and chaos experienced during the pre-martial law days caused by the people's indifference. During those times, people showed no concern as to what was going on with the society as long as they were not affected.

The support quote, "...the current sparking on the wire overhead had taken the five years-old's attention from the stars. Carlitos... thought he saw smoke along the limbs from which the clothes had been seared..." indicates that there was such poverty that people went as far as stealing; in this case, even electric wires were stolen in exchange for some food.

Another support quote, "Men disappeared in the cane fields of Negros. In the streets of Manila, student's bodies stopped bullets from high powered armalites meant for use in Vietnam..." shows that the pre-Martial law period were years of militarization. The military seemingly had the blanket power to maim and kill in the guise of discipline and authority.

These socio-political realities find manifestations in the psychological dimensions of fear, tendency to violate the law, and a disposition to question and soul-search. In the support quote, "His hand on the knocker of his mother's old house at four in the morning meant exactly that. He was running scared after learning that the mayor of Santa Rosa had been blown up in his car..." was shown that the pre-Martial law days brought fear to many. For Casper, it appears that not even those with authority felt secured of their own lives. This carried a message that if a big fish was afraid and running scared how much more for those people with less pedigree?

In the support quote, "We are aliens in our country. We are aliens because of the oligarchs and the ten percenters who will sell even Rizal for ten percent..." it was insinuated that during those days, the oligarchs had their way of sucking the economy. As Casper intimated, the oligarchs would even

"sell" the Filipino [represented by the national hero Jose Rizal] just so they could earn.

In another quote, "If he should try to save himself and he had to choose either his body or his soul, which? Were the duties of the citizen and the Christian, one?" Casper wanted to express how distressing things that happen to people can naturally led them to question their existence, their value system, and their beliefs.

These psychological realities reflect the philosophical dimension of conscientization, existentialism, and eventual human dignification. In the support quote, "The sacadas were beasts of work. Who said people were different as they were created with two legs to stand with dignity, raise his hands in supplication in praise, in dreams..." it was shown that people in those days have realized the inhumanity they experienced and felt that they were treated not much different from beasts of labor. They were supposed to be better than beasts, with two legs, symbolizing their being human.

In the support quote, "What convinced him to leave the seminary was what compelled him to enter; he wanted to be human and humane. Yet working with the 'sacadas', absorbing their smell, he felt lost. Impatient with God, he embraced the political chaos to throw himself into demonstrations, thinking this would bring God's kingdom into the temporal one..." was shown how the adversities experienced by people that were extremely painful made them take a course of action that is equally painful and violent, and they hope this would bring resolution, like demonstrations, protest marches, and encounters with the military.

Another support quote, "...to make one's life and deeds the stronghold against the abuse of tyrants, the schemes of the ambitious, the cupidity of the corrupt..." shows that the onslaught of abuses and hurts witnessed and experienced by the people made them struggle and decide that one's life should be the shield and the arm to cast off the decadence that is destroying the lives of people. It was as if one's life is a gift to the battered others.

3.2. *Bamboo in the Wind* by Azucena Grajo Uranza

The socio-political dimension revealed the themes of militarization, abuses and brutality especially to women, insatiable greed and human exploitation. In the support quote, "This was the beginning of an odyssey in his beloved city where he found an insidious lawlessness creeping upon the land. Had a mounting crescendo of violence- the arrests, the torture and finally the darkness that overtakes the land..." the characters of the novel were shown to be caught up in a scenario where violent killings were done by the military under the Marcos regime.

In the support quote, "Ligaya, the pretty sister of Ramon Limzon was raped by a soldier who pursued her up to San Sebastian Church where she sought refuge during the massacre demonstrators at Mendiola. Minda suffered the brutalities of the military beyond human endurance. When Martial Law was declared, she was apprehended and bought to Camp Crame where she was tortured, humiliated, raped

and finally hanged to death..." it was shown that during those times, the pain and suffering of women were caused by militarization. There was a depiction of women disfiguration.

In another quote, "*The tenancy problem that Larry attended to in Bacolod had something to do with the murder of some sugar planters somewhere in that place...*" it was shown that dehumanization was rampant and that this affected a wide range of people including the poor and the oppressed in the social strata.

These socio-political realities were observed to be manifested in the psychological dimension as confusion of values, activism, emotional turbulence, and deep anger. In the support quote, "*You've got an entirely new vocabulary. Bourgeois, elitist, relevant, country. Where did you learn all that? In the streets, while we were looking for our identity...*" the readers were given a sense of the varied outlooks and acceptance of Martial rule.

In the support quote, "*He had joined the movement because he felt that only by taking action could they awaken the country from its apathy and stop the national degradation. He had opposed violence because violence took away, the finest part of himself...*" Uranza wanted to convey that Filipinos when opened to a cause may also be expected to fight for it.

Further, in another quote, "*The soldier who had been grazed by the stone took another aim. And this time, the bullet, with a high deadly whine found its mark. Paula twisted in air like a bullet dancer executing a different twist and then went down, like a body spent...*" it was shown that in the many injustices encountered by the characters, they saw meaning in their own existence and compared themselves to that of a bamboo that stands tall and firm once again after a storm.

The psychological realities find reflection in the philosophical dimension in the form of humanization, urgency for change, and women involvement and emancipation. In the support quote, "*Don't worry about us, Señorito. As long as the land is there, there will be food for everyone...*" it was shown that the injustices suffered by the Filipinos awakened a sense of social awareness.

In the support quote, "*No, change need not be violent. We can help these people by opening up a 24-hour legal office where they can come to when they are victimized by the police or military...*" efforts towards human dignification and social justice amongst people were depicted to be sought by the characters. In another quote, "*Minda organized the congress of women to unite the aims and goals of women in all sectors of society. Salvacion joined the congress as she realized that reforms would be at hand...*" the birth of the new Filipino was shown to be like that of a bamboo pliant and submissive, but in retrospect, the Filipino character was a torrent of human anger and pain turned loose.

3.3. Killing Time in a Warm Place by Jose Dalisay Jr.

The socio-political dimension presented in this novel includes the themes of student activism, salvaging and militarization. In the support quote, "*The University was*

under siege by the military; we had set up barricades of commandeered tables, benches and chairs... We camped behind this makeshift wall, students and professors alike, listening to speeches, singing revolutionary songs..." the beginning years of the Martial law turmoil were depicted, where the struggle and active response from the youth came with fervor and idealism.

In the support quote, "*Sometimes they use ice and let it lie there. Clothes are stripped off and sometimes mouths are battered. One will be asked to sit or lie on the ice for 15 minutes or until it melts...*" it was shown that the government employed its guns, power and authority to suspected non-believers of the New Society it was brewing up.

In another quote, "*50 soldiers from the CAPCOM, 50 intelligence officers, 100 Air Force men and 100 policemen raided squatter areas in Maricaban Pasay...*" Dalisay made concrete descriptions of these realities in the Philippines as they existed during those critical years.

These socio-political realities yielded manifestations in the psychological dimension in the form of discontent of the idealistic youth, feelings of nationalistic fervor, fear and horror of losing one's freedom. In the support quote, "*Better to spend doing other things, useful things, not only, for ourselves...*" is shown how a person's character struggle affected his thinking, attitudes, and outlook toward conventions.

In the support quote, "*Benny would paste 'Remember Delfin' posters, to remind people of Delfin, a young student who died in the struggle...*" the depiction of the youth who were young, vocal, and arrogant and filled with idealistic hopes for a change took stand.

In another quote, "*And the boredom and indescribable loneliness... At dusk, we would sit in rows on long benches facing west where the city was, gazing across the barbed wire fence...*" Dalisay presented the reality that man becomes a "new man" after idealism and experience passed away.

The psychological realities also find reflections in the philosophical dimensions of social accountability, perception of prison time as a kind of killing time in a warm place, and a paradigm shift. In the support quote, "*Dare to struggle, dare to win. Then we should talk about those things in class instead of some dumb cow...*" is shown how the character of social accountability made manifest as exemplified by quitting school as it was not deemed of value to the needs of the hour and as for him school then was empty, meaningless. It would be more heroic for Filipino youth during those days to fight.

In the support quote, "*I lost my breath while staring up at the mildewed ceiling... my hair felt rooted to the floor in the soldier's age. I felt cold and slender fingers driving into my nose butt, into my lungs, the surge and the sting of fizz lifting my brain as the Coke washed over me. ...*" shows how the character's imprisonment brings about a realization to change.

In another quote, "*It was my mistake that I had cried revolution with speech and clamor and song, with particular faces, with a febrile dream of forests, with a freedom it had*

truly yet to earn. I had no great urge to pause and write *TADOR TUTA...*” is shown how after the imprisonment of character made him feel the need to shift priorities. He was no longer interested to join the cause and die. The ideal was changed with fear and was lost with age.

3.4. Viajero by F. Sionil Jose

The analysis for the novel *Viajero* is presented as a matrix shown in Table 2. Matrix presentation allows a structured format that aids in content analysis [23]. Using this matrix,

the socio-political dimension observed can be listed to include the themes of poverty, problems on land reform and the Epifanio De los Santos Avenue (EDSA) revolution. These found manifestations in the psychological dimension as acceptance of poverty, search for one’s identity, and the realization of being a traveller in one’s land with the need to make a choice. These reflect the philosophical dimensions of renewed search for identity, the necessity of making an intellectual and personal choice and the choice to relinquish the Marcosian vision of a New Society.

Table 2. Matrix on the treatment of the novel Viajero by F. Sionil Jose.

| Realities | Support Quotes | Impressions |
|---|--|---|
| I. Socio-political Dimension The character is made to see the socio-political muddle of the country which is poverty. Problems of land and land reform as well as reason for the underground movement which the government fails to understand are manifested. The account of EDSA Revolution and the miracle brought by it is depicted. | From his hotel window, he could see beggars in numbers and houses in disorganized location with buildings in between squatter houses. Buddy witnessed the burning of the village by the military as well as the killing of the farmers suspected as rebels. What he had witnessed in the mountains was written in the newspaper...but the government did nothing about it. On the highway, he saw many people-including religious in their hood and cassock. There were truckloads of soldiers with guns. Nuns and civilians formed a human barricade on the highway. | There was a wide disparity in the socio-economic status between the rich and the poor The government pictured the peasants as rebels. More so they were silenced by the military Sionil Jose puts into realization that Filipinos collectively heaved their bursts of anger and expressed this through spontaneous participation of people in all walks of life in a mass action |
| II. Psychological Dimension The desire to find out one’s identity is highlighted. Degradation and acceptance of poverty by people are manifested. Each Filipino is depicted as a traveller in his own land and has come to realize that he needs to make a choice. | I have done no loyalty to the Philippines, no deep feelings for the place. It’s just that I was born there... I came to the Philippines because I want to look upon my beginnings. But more than this, as Ninoy said, it is here where I belong, where I should be able to contribute something... In this country, so many things seem so bizarre, so funny. But to us Filipinos, we can’t understand. Imelda has three thousand pairs of shoes. Remember, millions of Filipinos go barefoot. All I ask of you is compassion. All of us, we do a lot of wanderings, 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... | Social empathy built by social realities as witnessed by the character became deeper as he went to several places in his so-called country The psychological bearings in the novel are focused on the questions most Filipinos have in mind during the rule of Martial law. The novel expounds that one’s psychological beliefs influence the way a person reacts and relates with others as one travels in life. |
| III. Philosophical Dimension Search for identity was depicted in the character of the novel. People had to make their own intellectual or own personal choices. Filipinos choose to give up the vestige of the New Society. | The truth is, American you may be, is that you love Filipinos, the freedom and justice our motherland longs for, just like the many men whose lives you have studied. You are one of them, Buddy a traveler, and now you must go where your heart is. Leo’s wife told him: I love my family very much. But all the more now that I cannot go back to them and live there. Those big houses-what do they really give the people? Happiness? Fulfillment? Buddy gave up his life of luxury in a place of a life in the mountains. All of us, we do a lot of wanderings but in the end, we have to remain to where we come from. In a sense, this is what life is all about. An endless searching, some find what they are looking for; others are destined to drift in space rootless. | Sionil showed the readers that the bad experiences and sufferings of people in Martial law days have transformed them to become existentialists. Viajero personified the countless and faceless Filipinos who nurtured the meaning of human dignification and social justice in their minds and soul. The heroic stance of the Filipinos is manifested by giving of selves, time, resources, giving each other courage, fired with prayers. |

3.5. Dream Eden by Linda Ty- Casper

The matrix on the treatment of the novel *Dream Eden* is shown in Table 3. The socio-political dimension revealed includes clientelism that degenerated into sultanism, demobilization of traditional oppositionist, and the shaping of collective angst to stop the transgressions of Martial law. These find manifestations in the psychological dimension as

a realization that psychological motives, thoughts and aspirations are shaped by the realities that people face. This realization included the unjustness of the government and people’s frustration for their inability to act. As such, the people seek a kind of revolution that is novel to the world: a peaceful, and almost of filial kind. These themes bear the philosophical dimension of human rights that is based on the doctrine of social contract, natural rights that should be preserved otherwise would just be tantamount to destruction

of human dignity; and popular sovereignty where expressed agreement of governance, in the desire to rule. government cannot have power except when there is

Table 3. Matrix on the treatment of the novel Dream Eden by Linda Ty-Casper.

| Realities | Support Quotes | Impressions |
|--|---|---|
| I. Socio-political Dimension Clientelism degenerated into sultanism where the socio-political realities became eminently corrupt. The Filipinos preferred the sultanistic regime where the dictator exercises power to family and friends as cronies. Traditional oppositionist was demobilized like Marcos accusing Aquino to be a Huk coddler and was charged with murder and subversion, rebellion, and illegal possession of firearms. There was this shaping of a collective angst among the people to stop the transgression in Martial Law days. | The boundaries between the public treasury and the wealth of the ruler become blurred. He and his collaborators, with his consent... appropriate public funds freely, establish profit-oriented monopolies and demands gifts and pay offs from business from which no public accounting is given. The ruler often shows generosity to his followers... and the economy is not for planning but for extracting resources. In Benhur Vitaliano's hand the small silver box he draws out from his desk drawer appears to reflect the sky... Inside is a key chain he bought in Boston in 1983 the year Benigno Aquino was assassinated. We cannot fight Marcos with arms because he has so many. We cannot fight his money, because we do not have any. The only way we can fight him is with morality. | The building of dynasty was made possible through the declaration of Martial Law of which Marcos' financial reach was extended to cronies who cohorted with him in crony capitalism. Marcos' Martial Law abolished Congress, shackled newspapers, radio and television stations, banned demonstrations and imprisoned leaders of the opposition. The People's Power Revolution answers the need of the time when Filipinos almost lost hope. It was people and prayer in supplication. Casper through this novel highlighted memory in those dark days of history. |
| II. Psychological Dimension The novel reached out to the readers that psychological motives, thoughts and aspirations of people are shaped by the realities they face. Realization of most Filipinos on the unjustness of the government and their frustration for their inability to act on these The revolution of the people sought is a kind of revolution novel to the world: peaceful, almost filial | From time to time Benhur forgets how dangerous it is to think. He discovers more things to rectify than the scrambled voter's registration lists, the crony capitalism that drains the economy until workers get only the equivalent of one and a half days to pay for the day's work. ... dollars taken out of the future of thousands of children... with nothing in their lives but the shirts on their backs: dead children Boni Serrano is like a playground. In the middle of the street, a man holds a torch. A man with a guitar is accompanying the singing while the younger folks are dancing to quick music. | Casper in this novel suggests that things like this happen in pre-Martial Law days and people are aware of these but are inactive because of indifference, apathy and fear. Filipinos were drove to sadness and anger because of images of unfairness. The Filipino soul is viewed with peace deep inside that when they revolted, it is through prayers and shared beliefs of God's intervention. |
| III. Philosophical Dimension The construct of human rights is based on the doctrine of social contract where government was instituted to counter possible ills which were accepted by the people. The construct of natural rights should be preserved. To trample these rights is to destroy a man's dignity. The popular sovereignty construct is also present where government cannot have power except when there is expressed agreement of governance, in the desire to rule. | Benhur tosses into the wastebasket a sheet of paper on which he has written: People are violated by conditions of life where wealth is in the hands of five percent of the population, forcing them to live and be stuck up in the space between estate fences and ditches, shielded from view by leaves of banana and palms. Celso was not the first one they killed in Kapalaran. Manuela who sold carabao milk and kesong puti, was shot... Marcos, of course, is not the only culprit. Benhur considers public enemies all those candidates who use the country to fight for their own political lives; who put themselves forward, artfully packaged through media hype, as the sole hope of the people, who treat government employment as a nine to five job, not worth their loyalty or time. | The Philippine society was ill-governed, and it showed anarchy and depravity. Marcos was supposed to use the government to cleanse the country, but he started the government's molestations like corruption, as all rules came from the head himself. The dictator used the concept of the New Society as a cloak to protect the Filipinos' natural rights, but the truth is violations in the forms of bloodshed, disappearance, and terrorism abounds. Those politicians who pledge to be real servants and good politicians cheated the Filipino people and because of this just like the people of all ages they have to defend their rights. The Filipinos are fed up with the dictator's atrocities that they opted for People Power revolution- the weapon of the oppressed people. |

From the impressions derived from the analysis of the realities as depicted in the five novels, the philosophical dimension in particular would reveal the emergence of human transformations of the characters arising from their experiences of the Marcosian era. These human transformations include the evolvement of the philosophical constructs of human dignification and that of being a man for

others. The authors were able to show and project the realities in history in the characters and plot of their novels; and reconstruct a simulation of human transformational process which can or had happened in reality and was alluded as a possible reason for the subsequent actual outcome of historical events.

4. Conclusion

An epoch of the Marcosian era was established from the socio-political realities depicted in the five Philippine novels in English. The realities depicted in the novels form a continuum of events, circumstances, plots, settings and characters that aptly parallel the historical events of the Marcosian era. The authors have succeeded in emulating the “deeper meaning”, the transformation of the human consciousness through the characters, and made apparent two important learnings namely: human dignification and being a man for others.

The Philippine literature is a rich repository of materials that capture the Filipino consciousness as he traverses through time. The novels were able to reconstruct history in a more realistic scenario that would have been lost in historical accounts. These novels capturing socio-political realities give life to history and are indeed a national treasure where Filipinos in contemporary times derive insights for human transformational learning.

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