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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Presence of Eroticism in Philippine Short Stories

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#### ABSTRACT

This study explored the presence of eroticism in selected Philippine short stories. There were four stories covered such as "The Riddle" by F. Sionil Jose, "The Virgin" by Kerima Polotan Tuvera, "Magnificence" by Estrella D. Alfon, "Midsummer" by Manuel Arguilla, "Dead Stars" by Paz Marquez Benitez and "How My Brother Leon Brought A Wife" by Manuel Arguilla. This literary study has to answer this lone question: What are the manifestations of eroticism, and how is eroticism presented in the different stories? Using qualitative design (focused on content-analysis) with two aid formal and psychoanalytic approaches of interpretation, the study yielded the following findings: The eight stories contained eroticism that revolved around physical attraction towards the opposite sex; love and sex; lust; husband-wife relationship; and physical admiration. Based on the study's findings, the researcher concludes that Eroticism, which manifests in the forms of physical attraction towards the opposite sex; love and sex; lust; and physical admiration, are present in the covered eight Philippine short stories in English. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researchers have to advance the following recommendations: Literature teachers should expose students to various literary pieces of Philippine literature and expose further students to various literary approaches to analyze literary *opus*es appropriately. Themes on eroticism in Philippine short stories and other genres need to be handled carefully by teachers by allowing students to see the bad side and good side of such themes. Lessons need to be sought after the come up themes for self-reflection. Future researchers are inspired to replicate this study.

#### KEYWORDS

Eroticism, Short stories in English, Philippines

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#### 1. Introduction

The Holy Book, considered one magnum opus of World Literature, has unfolded love: *eros, filia and agape*. With many existing literatures around the world, various literary genres have embraced love and proved on their literary pages that love is one of the perennial subjects that ceaselessly win writers.

Literature is either fiction or non-fiction. Fiction is a product of imagination but with the truthfulness of what has been happening around. Its events are carved from the truth, thereby exhibiting the faithfulness of reality with a goal to entertain and delight the readers of spectators. Fiction can be expressed in the form of short stories, novels, drama and film.

A short story is a type of literature that attempts to convey man's emotions and ideas in the most realistic moment. It is an account of human being responding to human situations that can bring burden or joy to the people who experience them. A short story is fictional narrative prose. Fiction is an imaginative re-creation and the reconstruction of life. In this sense, the short story is fiction that represents human life on two levels: the world made up of human actions and experiences and subjective reality and dealing with human apprehension and comprehension. Both of these worlds are realms of facts, connected and mutually interdependent, yet they are not the same (Tan, 2001).

Today, literary works with erotic elements have gained popularity. A number of contemporary foreign authors are popular for their works with sexy and erotic themes, like Harold Robbins and Ken Follett.

Eroticism is one aspect of the inner life of man. We fail to realize this because man is everlastingly in search of an object outside himself, but this object answers the innerness of the desire. The choice of an object always depends on the personal taste of the subject; even if it lights upon a woman whom most men would choose, the decisive factor is often an intangible aspect of this woman, not an objective quality; possibly nothing about her would force our choice if she did not somehow touch our inner being.

Richard Rudgley (2000) states that the depiction of sexual acts in literature is as old as civilization; in fact, such depictions can also be found painted on various ancient buildings. The concept of pornography, however, as understood today, did not exist until the Victorian era. Previous to that time, though some sex acts were regulated or stipulated in-laws, looking at objects or images depicting them was not. In some cases, specific books, engraving or image collections were censored or outlawed, but the trend to compose laws that restricted viewing of sexually explicit things, in general, was a Victorian construct.

According to Hyde (1964), erotic literature includes fictional and factual stories and accounts that sexually arouse the reader, whether written with that intention or not. Such erotica takes the form of novels, short stories, poetry, true-to-life memoirs and sex manuals. Erotic literature, however, has often been subject to censorship and legal restraints as regards its publication.

Literary pieces with erotic undertones can be analyzed and discussed openly, constructively, explicitly in a scholarly manner in or outside the classrooms by anyone of legal age.

This study was chosen to present the presence of eroticism in different short stories as a form of human expression – of passion or feelings which are universal in nature. Besides, this study will be a fertile ground that promises to student readers the true value of literary criticism through in-depth analysis of the literary materials covered and, at the same time, a grand contribution to the world of literary criticism.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to investigate eroticism as a leitmotif in selected Philippine short stories. Specifically, the literary inquiry sought to answer the question below:

What are the manifestations of eroticism, and how is eroticism presented in the different stories?

## **3. Literature Review**

Eroticism (from the Greek word, eros—"desire") is a quality that causes sexual feelings (Webster, 2007) as well as a philosophical contemplation concerning the aesthetics of sexual desire, sensuality, and romantic love. That quality may be found in any form of artwork, including painting, sculpture, photography, drama, film, music, or literature. It may also be found in advertising. The term may also refer to a state of sexual arousal or anticipation of such – an insistent sexual impulse, desire, or pattern of thoughts.

In psychology and religion, the individual's experience of sex is of key importance in shaping the personality. Whether it be the loss of virginity, the acceptance of homosexuality or the cultivation of a fetish, erotic experience creates a window that looks upon the writer's mind and upon the writer's culture. Eroticism in literature may unlock or loosen the bonds of guilt and shame. The erotic experience of another may allow the individual to see that he or she is not alone and that fantasies once thought to be perverse are, in fact, shared by many. Furthermore, the nature of fantasies, particularly if they are frowned upon by the culture, may reveal a hidden prejudice toward a group or lifestyle.

Among academics, the overwritten and clichéd passages of pulp fiction are not part of the literary canon. Pulp fiction, named for the cheap quality of the paper on which it is printed, is deemed to be too obvious in its intent to be classified as literature. Its aim is only to arouse readers, leaving them comfortably stationary within their own prejudices, understanding, and views. Pulp fiction does not attempt higher levels of artistry in writing, which, although it too might arouse readers, also challenges their notions of erotic experience. Indeed, perhaps the only safe generalization that can be made about the erotic experience is that it is incredibly varied. For example, Ernest Hemingway's novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) explores male bonding and the competition among males for females. At the center of the novel is the narrator Jake Barnes, an alcoholic who is impotent spiritually and physically. Ironically, the courage he displays in the war, which causes his wound, creates his failure in the bedroom, becoming a commentary on men's enslavement to their own pride and to the bodies of women. On the other hand, in *Tropic of Capricorn*, Miller sees the crippling agent as that of Puritanism, which he indicts for its demonization of sex. In Puritanism's place, Miller substitutes a manic celebration of the body, making it glorious in all its imperfection.

Another aspect of identity and eroticism in literature lies in the treatment of homosexuality. In Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), for example, homosexual love is seen as a threat to the male ego, challenging the athletic, macho man's sense of himself and leading to alcoholism and suicide. Burroughs' cult novel, *Naked Lunch*, however, celebrates homosexuality. The novel also examines the limits of personality as it is challenged by bondage and drug addiction. A gentler gay love is explored in Truman Capote's classic *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958), a novel of sexual initiation depicting a young woman's journey from her hillbilly past into the heart of New York City. "A Diamond Guitar," also by Capote, is a lyrical account of the blossoming of homosexual love in prison between an ageing convict and a young man. When the young man escapes, the older man dreams of him while he strokes the diamond guitar abandoned under his bed, imagining the wide world beyond the prison walls. In *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973), Rita Mae Brown depicts another sort of gay love: A young lesbian loses her innocence and confronts a world of prejudice and intolerance, discovering the pain and joy inherent in her sexuality.

Another woman explores a different aspect of female sexuality in Jong's *Fear of Flying* (1973). In this novel, the woman is the man's sexual equal, matching him in the lust for conquest and in the degree of her sexual pleasure. So long damned, the promiscuous woman, a childless adult who has escaped the tyranny of biology, is celebrated. In contrast, Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969) presents the male as a slave to testosterone, doomed to pursue an endless quest to satisfy his insatiable libido. The darker side of lust appears in John Irving's *The World According to Garp* (1978), it depicts the average male's horror of rape—an act of sexual violence.

Romantic novels are sometimes marketed as erotica — or vice versa, as "mainstream" romance. In recent decades, they have begun to exhibit blatant (if not poetic) descriptions of sex. Erotic Romance is a relatively new genre of romance with an erotic theme and very explicit love scenes, but with romance at the heart of the story. Erotic fantasy is a subgenre of fantasy fiction and utilizes erotica in a fantasy setting. These stories can essentially cover any of the other subgenres of fantasy, such as high fantasy, contemporary fantasy, or even historical fantasy.

Erotic memoirs include those of Casanova's *Histoire de ma vie* from the eighteenth century, 'Walter's *My Secret Life* from the nineteenth, Frank Harris's *My Life and Loves* (1922-27) from the twentieth and *One Hundred Strokes of the Brush Before Bed* by Melissa from the twenty-first. However, it should be remembered that the 'memoir' format repeatedly recurs in erotic fiction. Ian Gibson, in *The Erotomaniac*, makes an excellent case for *My Secret Life* being written by Henry Spencer Ashbee, thus casting doubt on the veracity of the whole, highly salacious book.

Bayron (2008) studied the dominant themes of selected Philippine novelty songs depicting erotic or sensual images. He concluded that these challenged readers, especially those who patronize novelty songs, to be more critical about things considered fun and entertainment.

J. Neil Garcia (2003) has written a summary on the procedure he followed in teaching Philippine gay literature some time ago at The University of the Philippines. This was included in his book *Performing the Self: Occasional Prose*. In the chapter, *Philippine Gay Literature*, Garcia classified his own works, the two Ladlad anthologies, into nine different classifications. A number of Filipino short story writers and poets, along with their respective works, were mentioned. A short overview of each of their works is given to justify Garcia's idea of classifying them. One of them is the "bathhouse."

From the book *Closet Queeries*, Garcia (1997) wrote: "What Ladlad perhaps seeks to offer is not an escape from homosexuality, but an alternative version of it: whether gays write about their lives or not, our society will become (as it already has) increasingly become sexually self-conscious....." "Pleasure is what Ladlad, in the end, is all about."

The study of Daug (2012) showed these summaries of findings: Three stories have expressed eroticism thru the use of recollection and of imagination with the use of rich imagery, and these are **The Night I Cry, Ang Himas Ni Ricardo and Sila, Isang Hapon**. All of the ten stories generally employed the form of imagery in presenting eroticism. Some employ the form of similes like the stories **The Other Regina, Summer Solstice, and Desire**. The most effective device used in these stories was with the use of *Imagery* evident for the most part in all erotic scenes in each story; the objective to create mental images for effective sensory stimulation has been achieved effortlessly, thus enhancing the sensations of the readers as they read specifically the scenes with erotic elements in them. **Heat, Midsummer** and **Desire** highlight more on desire and attractions for the opposite sex. It is the id of the characters which was generally at work in these stories. While the stories **The Other Regina, Ang Himas Ni Ricardo, Sila, Isang Hapon, and Fairy Tale For the City** echoed the characters' need for acceptance and intimacy in every sexual involvement, the characters had. These four short stories have different complicated erotic presentations and rationales. All three of Freud's id, ego and superego are seen to have played interchangeably in the motivations of the characters. And the remaining short stories, **The Night I Cry, Suite Bergamasque, and Summer Solstice**, showed three different motives of the characters resulting in acts of eroticism. In the story **The Night I Cry**, the story is brought forth through the incestuous acts between a brother and a sister. **Suite**

**Bergamasque** on the other hand, depicted eroticism to answer the motivation of the character to be free from anger and emotional turmoil. And lastly, **Summer Solstice** showed the motivation of the women to dominate their men, which was clearly governed by the pleasure principle of the id, which was depicted through some erotic and downright sexual actions. In each of the stories, the characters have their own motives, which manifested the eroticism in their thoughts and actions.

#### **4. Methodology**

##### **4.1 Research Design.**

The analytical-descriptive method of research was utilized in this study. Thus, this study focused more on analyzing the eight Philippine short stories to be able to show and describe the presence of eroticism and how they are manifested in the literary genre.

##### **4.2 Data Gathering Procedure**

The short stories under study were gathered from different resources. They were read carefully and meticulously to see the presence of eroticism and then were subjected to analysis and interpretation. The researchers will begin by reading different short stories that are essential to the analysis of the study. These stories will be taken from different books and from the internet. In selecting the short stories, the researcher will consider the huge task where there is the presence of eroticism as manifested by the different characters.

##### **4.3 Research Material**

The analysis will focus on such a purpose paving the way to finally treat the following selected short stories: *The Riddle* by F. Sionil Jose, *The Virgin* by Kerima Polotan Tuvera, *Magnificence* by Estrella D. Alfon, *Midsummer* by Manuel Arguilla, *Dead Stars* by Paz Marquez Benitez and *How My Brother Leon Brought A Wife* by Manuel Arguilla.

#### **5. Results and Discussion**

**Results and discussion are presented based on the lone question: What are the manifestations of eroticism, and how is eroticism presented?**

##### **5.1 "The Riddle" by F. Sionil Jose**

In the story "The Riddle", eroticism is manifested through man's attraction to the opposite sex. This is presented through the narration – a recollection, of Pepe about Ella:

*"She had been a classmate in college, all through four years of it; she was not beautiful really, but charming and wonderful company; she gave a man confidence in himself, in his talents, and she had all the boys wanting to date her. She aroused the male protective instinct in them, yet she wasn't completely helpless-looking, just fragile. And, of course, she had a way with words."*

From the passage above, it can be analyzed that Ella is somewhat a woman who can win every man's affection. As said by Pepe, "She aroused in them the male protective instinct" is a show that Ella is an object of every man's attraction for love or sexual feeling. In fact, Pepe has always been attracted to Ella but is just unable to say it in words.

Moreover, the story "The Riddle" further cues eroticism though not displayed completely in the literary text, but some sparks are hinted at when deeply analysed. Passages may not be available, but instances can serve as proof. How is it manifested? It is demonstrated through the instance of elopement between Ella and Jimmy. It can be supposed that Ella must have been fooled by Jimmy of his "make-believe" tales that cause Ella to elope with him, yet the presence of eroticism is still manifested. This is it: Ella goes with Jimmy because she, too, has a feeling for Jimmy. Further, after knowing that Jimmy has only painted a world of fantasy for her – of Jimmy's falsehood -- his mansion, his vast farm and others, Ella could have left him. But, the "eros" in her for Jimmy is definitely present. Why does she continue to live with Jimmy? It is love erotic that binds the both of them and eventually leads them to see the fruits of their love – their children.

##### **5.2 "The Virgin" by Kerima Polotan Tuvera**

Who would think that a woman – one of the chiefs of a construction company, Miss Mijares, who at 34 (still a virgin) has still cued the readers of her erotic plight? In fact, it is made known through Miss Mijares' thoughts of love. It is presented through the narration. Let us consider this passage:

*"And yet Miss Mijares did think of love. Secret, short-lived thoughts flitted through her mind in the jeepneys she took to work when a man pressed down beside her, and through her dress, she felt the curve of his thigh."*

The passage above is a hint of eroticism. Miss Mijares "did think of love", and she has the desire for the love and affection of a man. The fact that she imagines when riding jeepneys "a man pressed down beside her and through her dress she felt the curve of his (man's) thigh" is indicative that at her age, she still has a longing for love towards the opposite sex.

Another instance is manifested by the character, Miss Mijares, as narrated. The passage proves:

*"And in the movies, to sink into a seat as into an embrace, in the darkness with a hundred shadowy figures about her and high on the screen, a man kissing a woman's mouth while her own fingers stole unconsciously to her unbruised lips."*

The passage above clearly shows us the seemingly-evolving leitmotif of eroticism. Miss Mijares from Freud's psychological lens has shown eroticism as she, through movie watching, shows her humanity of being a woman who in silence really longs for love and sex. The fact that she watches romance movies is a display of her erotic tendencies. As seen in the movie – "a man kissing a woman's mouth", it leads Miss Mijares to have "her own fingers stole unconsciously to her unbruised lips."

Truly in silence, Miss Mijares has conveyed her erotic being. Another instance is her narrative assessment of the newly-hired carpenter (from the province) under her headship. The passage proves:

*"He (carpenter) was not starved, like the rest. His clothes, though old, were pressed, and she could see the cuffs of his shirt buttoned and wrapped about big, strong wrists."*

The passage with Miss Mijares' observation seems to draw us to her tacit appreciation/admiration of the carpenter. The passage paints her as a woman who even thirsts for love.

As the researchers read through the story, an instance of Miss Mijares' person has appeared to tell us of her undeniable feeling towards the carpenter. She has unleashed her femininity – that she still can love a man even at her age. Her "eros" for the carpenter-character is gradually manifested. The passage below (in conversation or dialogue form) reads:

*"I (carpenter) went to the province ma'am (Miss Mijares), he said, on his return.  
"You could have sent someone to tell us, she said.  
"It was an emergency, ma'am, he said; my son died.  
"How so?"*

*A slow bitter anger began to form inside her. "But you said you were not married!"  
"No, ma'am he said gesturing"  
"Are you married? She asked loudly."  
"No ma'am"  
"But you have - - you had a son! She said.*

The conversation above pinpoints the internal mood of Miss Mijares – somewhat a feeling of anger as the carpenter-character goes home without any notice for her. More of her fury is displayed upon knowing that he goes home because his son died – leading her to believe that the carpenter is married – a subjugation of her intended passion, love for him. But it is known that he is not married as he had a son without a wife. Yet, deeply analyzing the passage of their conversation is a manifestation of Miss Mijares' eroticism. It can be analyzed that she is in love with the carpenter; her anger proves that her love for him would be naught if the carpenter were married.

In the end part of the story, a graver manifestation of eroticism is seen as the three passages prove:

*"Miss Mijares stepped down to a sidewalk in front of a boarded store. The wind had begun again, and she could hear it whipping in the eaves above her head. "Ma'am," the man's voice sounded at her shoulders, "I am sorry if you thought I lied." She gestured, bestowing pardon. (1)*

*"Up and down the empty, rain-beaten street she looked. It was as though all at once, everyone else had died, and they were alone in the world, in the dark. (2)*

*"In her secret heart, Miss Mijares' young dreams fluttered faintly to life, seeming monstrous in the rain, near this man --- seeming monstrous but sweet overwhelming. I must get away, she thought wildly, but he had moved and brushed against her, and where his touch had fallen, her flesh leaped, and she recalled how his hands had looked that first day, lain tenderly*

*on the edge of her desk and about the wooden bird (that had looked like a moving, shining dove) and she turned to him with her ruffles wet and wilted, in the dark she turned to him." (3)*

The first passage above with Miss Mijares bestowing her pardon to the carpenter shows that she is really in love with the carpenter. The second passage shows us the miniscule setting – a rain beaten street and everyone had died (total silence as people have to start sleeping), and the clause *"they were alone in the world"* shows the possibility of love-making. As such, the third and last passage culminates in the erotic tendency of the virgin as she is *"near this man"* with the man *"brushed against her and where his touch had fallen, her flesh leaped..."* and *"she turned to him"* finally proves that they are into the prelude of a romantic scene – a culminating scene of their love and affection for each other.

### **5.3 "Magnificence " by Estrella D. Alfon**

Eroticism in the story is manifested through a man's attraction towards an innocent girl. Eroticism is further presented through a man character – Vicente, who takes advantage of the girl's innocence. But it is unveiled gradually. Let us examine some passages:

*"It is about the man (Vicente) who appears kind and gentle to the family but had an evil desire to the innocent little girl."*

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

The above passages introduce Vicente's wily way of winning the little girl -- to be close to her by giving her three pencils and even give her the biggest one (with her brother with only one and smaller). Acting as a tutor to the children, Vicente seems to give special attention to the little girl so as to realize what he has in mind.

The giving is realized. The passage reads:

*"And the little girl had three pencils, two of the same circumferences as the little boy but colored red and yellow. And the third pencil, a jumbo size pencil really, was white and had been sharpened."*

As mentioned earlier, eroticism comes out little by little. The passage reads:

*"But the man (Vicente) said, are you not going to kiss me for those pencils? They both came forward, the little girl and the little boy, and they both made to kiss him, but Vicente slapped the boy smartly on his lean hips and said, Boys, do not kiss boys."*

The passage above is now conveying a bit of Vicente's erotic tendencies. When he asks: *"Are you not going to kiss me for those pencils"* it could be a fatherly one; thus, both the little boy and little girl come near to him to do so. But he slaps the little boy's hip as boys do not kiss boys. It can, therefore, be interpreted that he only wants the little girl to kiss him. The act of slapping the little boy's hip proves he has not shown her fatherly virtue, but an evil desire is lurking within him and only waiting for the right time to consummate his evil desire.

The passages below again present Vicente's bad intention for the little girl:

*"The man's arms tightened suddenly about the little girl until the little girl squirmed out of his arms and laughed a little breathlessly, disturbed but innocent, looking at the man with a smiling little question of puzzlement."*

*"Vicente took the girl up lightly in his arms, holding her under the armpits, and held her to sit down on his lap, and he said, still gently, what are your lessons for tomorrow? And the little girl turned to the paper on the table where she had been writing with the jumbo pencil, and she told him that that was her lesson, but it was easy."*

The passages above show that Vicente is now trying to realise her erotic desire for the girl (a sense of lust) as he would tighten his arms to hold the girl under his armpits and even let her sit on his lap. With this situation, it can be analyzed that Vicente has directed her lust towards the little girl. In fact, having been told to sit on Vicente's lap, *"The little girl kept squirming for somehow, she felt uncomfortable"*. The little girl must have noticed that something goes wrong with her sitting on Vicente's lap as she squirms and feels uncomfortable.

The evil desire (lust of Vicente) has to rest momentarily as the mother has been approaching them and could have seen the scenario. The passage below is the cessation of Vicente's lustful desire:

*"But Vicente had jumped up too soon as the little girl had jumped from his lap. He snatched at the papers that lay on the table and held them to his stomach, turning away from the mother coming."*

The question now is this: Does the mother see the scenario between Vicente and her little girl? She must have seen it as she is wrapped up with her fury and slaps Vicente in both cheeks – a conveyance of the fact that the mother knows the wicked Vicente who takes advantage of the little girl's innocence. The mother has to bathe her little girl, gives her a new dress, and drives her into sleep.

#### **5.4 "Midsummer" by Manuel Arguilla**

Eroticism is manifested through physical attraction. This is presented through the characters – Ading and Manong (who are both strangers to each other in an encounter) as author-narrated. Their unforgettable encounter takes place in a rural setting near a village well. The summer is intense in its exhausting and uncompromising heat. Manong, travelling with his bull and cart, arrives at the village well and finds the comely figure of Ading, to his surprise.

Eroticism, as mentioned, which takes in the form of physical attraction, starts with Manong -- a young *binata* boy. His descriptions for Ading (a young maiden) proves such attraction:

*"She (Ading) was young, surprisingly sweet and fresh amidst her parched surroundings. How graceful she was! Her hips tapered smoothly down to round thighs and supple legs."*

The above passage is giving an instance of admiration towards Ading – a sort of physical attraction. This is further sustained as he follows where Ading goes to fill her jar with water. Let us read the passage below:

*Watching Ading, Manong "turned and disappeared into the dry gorge"... "he followed the path. It led up the dry bed of the stream; the sharp fragments of sun-heated rocks were like burning coals under his feet. There was no sign of the young woman."*

The fact that he follows Ading (unnoticed by Ading) is a show that he wants to behold her more. *"He came upon her beyond a bed in the gorge, where a big mango tree, which had partly fallen from the side of the ravine, cast its cool shade over a well."* And they both meet each other.

Should the physical attraction of Manong be true? How about Ading? Let us consider the passage below:

Ading seeing Manong, *"she stood straight and still beside the road and regarded him with frank curiosity."* To be curious or inquisitive is somewhat a motive of also wanting to know more of the man. *"But having filled her jar, Ading has to go home."*

The "frank curiosity" of Ading about Manong is further displayed as she "came down the path once more." This is something intriguing. Does she feel something about Manong that she has to go back to the path once more?

Manong *"was half through with his meal when the girl (Ading) came down the path once more."* And so they have conversations with Manong starting to ask: *"Won't you join me (eating), Ading?"* The question poses a series of conversations that seem to show that they are no longer strangers to each other. In fact, *"They laughed and felt more at ease and regarded each other more openly. He took a long time fingering his rice before raising it to his mouth, the while he gazed up at her and smiled for no reason. Ading smiles back in turn"*.

The smile that Ading gives back for Manong can be a show that she, too, is attracted to Manong. This is proven as she invites Manong to their house, as read in the passage below:

*"Manong, why don't you come to our house and bring your animal with you? There is shade, and you can sleep, though our house is very poor."*

*"I would be troubling you, Ading."*

*"No. You come. I have told mother about you."*

The passages above certainly prove that Ading likes Manong too. The fact that she invites Manong to their and tells her mother about him justifies her attraction to Manong.

The last sentence of the last paragraph: *"He felt that he could follow the slender, lithe figure to the end of the world"* is indicative of a fledgling romance – a final picture of physical attraction for each other (an erotic evidence in the story) here sensual chemistry exists between the two.

### **5.5 "Dead Stars" by Paz Marquez Benitez**

In the story, eroticism is manifested through a shared love between the opposite sexes. This is presented through narration and through the characters. Let us consider these passages:

*"Papa, and when will the 'long table' be set?"*

*"I don't know yet. Alfredo is not very specific, but I understand Esperanza wants it to be next month."*

*Carmen sighed impatiently. "Why is he not a bit more decided, I wonder. He is over thirty, is he not? And still a bachelor! Esperanza must be tired waiting."*

The passages above show that the love of Esperanza and Alfredo could have been set for the long table – for marriage, an indication of the would-be union between two hearts that beat as one. In fact, the passage *"in the meantime, he (Alfredo) became very much engaged to Esperanza"* is proof of Alfredo's love for Esperanza.

Yet the love of Alfredo for Esperanza seems to fade. This happens when his inner person is won by another woman, Julia, who, to him, deserves more of his love and affection. Alfredo shows his other side – a man whose "eros" is transferable. True? Is it love or just a matter of fulfilling his lust after other women? Let us have the passage below for analysis:

*"Esperanza, Julia, the sorry mess he had made of life, the years to come even now beginning to weigh down, to crush—they lost concreteness, diffused into formless melancholy."*

The above passage with mention of Esperanza and Julia is a "mess" Alfredo makes in his life. Being engaged to Esperanza (who has been waiting for the long table), he still has his emotion radiated to another woman, Julia. Love or just lust? Let us consider the passage below:

*"Men commit themselves when but half-meaning to do so, sacrificing possible future fullness of ecstasy to the craving for immediate excitement."*

The passage above simply implies that there are men who commit their love for their object of love (women). But when commitment is not 100% -- *"half-meaning"* only, it can mean that there are men whose commitment is not truly defined in exchange for their *"craving for immediate excitement"*. This quoted passage can allude to Alfredo as he does not fortify his commitment to Esperanza as he still wants to keep on enjoying life -- *"craving for immediate excitement"* – of sex and lust to other women. In the story, Julia Salas bothers Alfredo –to the very extent that his plan for marriage to Esperanza is not yet fully decided as his flesh is craving for Julia. *"So he and Julia Salas had gone off to chat in the vine-covered porch"* is indicative that Alfredo wants to pursue Julia."

Alfredo seems to fall in love with Julia. The passage shows:

*"She was small and plump, with wide brown eyes, clearly defined eyebrows, and delicately modelled hips—a pretty woman with the complexion of a baby and the expression of a likable cow. Julia was taller, not so obviously pretty. She had the same eyebrows and lips, but she was much darker, of a smooth, rich brown with underlying tones of crimson which heightened the impression she gave of abounding vitality."*

The passage above points out Alfredo's admiration for Julia. In fact, he has lots of home visits for Julia. In fact, *"Esperanza had wanted to know if he went straight home after mass. Alfredo suddenly realized that he had not waited for Esperanza to come out of the church for several Sundays now as he had been wont to do. He had been eager to go neighbouring"*. This means that Alfredo has now considered Julia, a new woman to pursue, with his love fading away for Esperanza.

Esperanza soon confesses that she knew about his affair with Julia. In pursuit of his lust and heart's content, she encourages him to cancel the wedding. However, the wedding goes ahead as scheduled.

By circumstance, Alfredo's attraction to Julia could not be sustained as Julia says one day, *"I am going home."*

Yet, having been given by Julia of her home address, Alfredo, after eight years, chanced to visit Julia, being sent for some work duty. On his visit, he feels nostalgic and cannot resist his longing for Julia and soon finds an excuse to meet her. Julia is still single, which forces Alfredo to dream about starting a new life with her; however, he soon realizes that everything is not the same as it were before. Moreover, Julia has also changed lost something. Let us consider the passages below:

*"Why had he obstinately clung to that dream?"*  
*"So all these years—since when?— he had been seeing the light of dead stars, long extinguished, yet seemingly still in their appointed places in the heavens."*

Based on the above passages, it can be said that Alfredo's eroticism – that of lust, is ceased. His visit to Julia in which *"he had been seeing the light of dead stars, long extinguished"* could mean that what he feels for Julia is not true love but a mere longing of his flesh.

The passage in the end part of the story, which goes, *"An immense sadness as of loss invaded his spirit, a vast homesickness for some immutable refuge of the heart far away"*, is now Alfredo's realization that it is not Julia, but Esperanza (his wife) deserves his love. Julia is only an object of the need of his flesh – of his lust to fulfil yet subjugated.

### 5.5 "How My Brother Leon Brought Home A Wife" by Manuel Arguilla

This story could have dual manifestations of eroticism. Love could be one. The essence of "eros" love is manifested by Leon to her soon-to-be-wed lover, Maria and vice-versa. There is no need to discuss this further as the story rests upon the love of Leon and Maria – the very reason that Leon wants Maria to meet his family, much more, his father and mother for a possible wedding arrangement. The other erotic content in the story could have revolved around Baldo, the younger brother of Leon. Baldo unfolds his erotic tendency through a simple admiration or attraction (physical) towards Maria. This is presented through Baldo's words (narration):

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

The passage above the very opening paragraph of the story has out-rightly displayed Baldo's sense of admiration or even physical attraction towards Maria. His descriptions of Maria as "lovely, tall" are direct evidence.

In the next paragraph of the story, another instance shows us Baldo's admiration towards Maria, as read in the below passages:

*"She was fragrant like a morning when papayas are in bloom."*

Normal is the adolescent Baldo's admiration for Maria, but it can be more of fantasizing over Maria. The passage below proves:

*"She is very beautiful, Father."*  
*"I looked at Maria, and she was lovely. She was tall. Beside my brother Leon, she was tall and very still. Then I went out, and in the darkened hall, the fragrance of her was like a morning when papayas are in bloom."*

The fact that Baldo keeps on repeating the qualitative descriptions of Maria – lovely, beautiful, and tall is a form of admiration, yet when Baldo says, *"Then I went out, and in the darkened hall the fragrance of her was like a morning when papayas are in bloom"* shows that in the darkness he enjoys his imagination, his daydreaming on Maria.

The recurring description of Baldo for Maria: *"the fragrance of her was like a morning when papayas are in bloom"* serves as a leitmotif that builds up the theme of a young boy's physical attraction toward Maria.

### 6. Summary of Findings

This study focused on analyzing eroticism present in six Philippine short stories in English: "The Riddle" by F. Sionil Jose, "The Virgin" by Kerima Polotan Tuvera, "Magnificence" by Estrella D. Alfon, "Midsummer" by Manuel Arguilla, "Dead Stars" by Paz

Marquez Benitez and "How My Brother Leon Brought A Wife" by Manuel Arguilla. The study yielded the following findings: The six stories contained eroticism that revolved around physical attraction towards the opposite sex; love and sex; lust; and physical admiration.

## **7. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers conclude that: Eroticism, which is manifested in the forms of physical attraction towards the opposite sex; love and sex; lust; husband-wife relationship; and physical admiration are present in the six-covered Philippine short stories in English.

### **7.1 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researchers have to advance the following recommendations:

1. Literature teachers should expose students to various literary pieces of Philippine literature and expose further students to various literary approaches to analyze literary *opuses* appropriately.
2. Themes on eroticism in Philippine short stories and other genres need to be handled carefully by teachers by allowing students to see the bad side and good side of such themes. Lessons need to be sought after the come up themes for self-reflection.
3. Future researchers are inspired to replicate this study.

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