

The Filipinos in America in Filipino Fiction: Finding Spaces of Negotiation of Identity

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This research analyzes the identity construction and negotiation of Filipino migrants as reflected in selected fiction written by Filipino writers who migrated and have settled in America. Taking into consideration that the influx of Filipino migration to America dramatically increased in the 1960's, short stories that were written from this decade to the present which best reflect the themes of lived experiences, history and identity negotiation of Filipinos in America were chosen for analysis. Using Homi Bhaba's concepts of "third space", this paper argues that the negotiation of identity of Filipino migrants in America is best observed within the dynamics of international marriage, familial relationships and religious practices as reflected in the selected short stories. These spaces of identity negotiation allow "third space" to emerge, blurring the lines between two ideological dichotomies or essentialized notions of being Filipino or American. In the process of negotiation, a new subject position thus emerges and this puts Filipino migration, as reflected in the short stories into a new perspective. This new perspective reconceptualises and widens the scope of the definition of Philippine Literature or Filipino-American Literature. In this aspect, this new emergent Philippine Literature reflects that in the context of multiculturalism, identity, particularly Filipino identity is ever changing and is constantly negotiated.