

**Treading a wanderer's path: Reading the informal history in
F. Sionil Jose's *Viajero: A Filipino novel***

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Sionil Jose's masterpiece, *Viajero: A Filipino novel* (1993) puts the spotlight on not only the long winding history of the Philippines (from pre-Spanish to post-independence) but also on the great impact of literature on people's understanding of the social realism itself. As Adhikari (2002) proposes, literature of history or literary history is a cross between conventional history and pure fiction. It enables us to capture the human meaning of historical events and a sense of experiences of the individuals which the more conventional sort does not. To gain insights into such undocumented experiences, this study looks into the protagonist's narratives and the narratives of other Filipino historical characters. The analysis shows that the strong legacy of Spanish and American rules inevitably causes the Filipinos' loss of national identity. Other accounts including their hardships of life and struggles for survival are also vividly recalled. In spite of the misfortunes that the characters describe, however, the study maintains that the characters' narratives demonstrate a glimpse of people's strengths, patriotic love for their motherland and indefatigable determination to give meaning to their existence.