

An Analysis of Miguel Syjuco's *Ilustrado*: The Reconstructed Oriental Image

Authors : Christine Ivy A. Nogot

Abstract : Under the colony of Spain for more than three centuries, the Philippines has a deep-rooted structure of Western ideologies and colonialism. The late 19th century, the period of Enlightenment, created a significant impact on our history when a group of middle-class Filipino men were sent to Europe to study. They were called *Ilustrados*, a Spanish word for erudite. They were the enlightened; the well-educated, intellectual scholars. Their writings provide intellectual grounds for the awakening of national consciousness that eventually prompted national movements and revolutions. They helped to establish a postcolonial society. In the modern era, Miguel Syjuco, a Filipino expatriate, wrote a novel and titled it *Ilustrado*. It is a representation of the liberal mind of the diasporic author in contemporary discourse. It provides a critical examination of the *ilustrado* in transition through the character of Miguel, who is also an expatriate writer. Using Syjuco's award-winning novel as the primary text and anchored on Said's concept of Orientalism, this paper examines how the depiction of features of the Eastern world is presented in the literary discourse. This paper looks into Said's concept of orientalism as a hegemonic discursive structure and shows how Western superiority influences the Eastern culture in literary discourse. It explores Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony to explore Said's argument that Western powers conquer the orient through culture and ideology. This paper presents how dominant ideologies and the social context redefine the *ilustrado* in the contemporary era.

Keywords : cultural hegemony, *ilustrado*, orientalism, postcolonial

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