



## Exploring Rhetorical Figures as Devices of Communicative Literary Style in Filipino Novels in English

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study investigated the rhetorical figures utilized by Filipino authors in English novels as devices for producing communicative and expressive literary styles. It aimed to explore how such figures function to enhance persuasion, emotional depth, and cultural expression in Filipino literary works written in English.

**Methodology:** Anchored in a descriptive qualitative research design, the study examined five selected novels—Three Filipino Women(Jose, 2008), Magdalena (Brainard, 2016), The Gangster of Love (Hagedorn, 1996), Recuerdo (Hidalgo, 1996), and Women in the House (Cuizon, 2006). Deductive and descriptive coding were employed to identify and interpret the use of metaphor, irony, personification, euphemism, and hyperbole as rhetorical devices representing women's experiences and sociocultural realities.

**Results:** Findings revealed that rhetorical figures play a pivotal role in shaping expressive literary styles that heighten emotional resonance, enhance persuasiveness, and reflect Filipino identity and values. Metaphor and irony were most frequently used to convey complex emotions and critique social structures, while euphemism and personification provided subtlety and vivid imagery in narrative expression.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that the rhetorical artistry of Filipino novelists contributes significantly to the communicative power of literature. Rhetorical figures not only embellish literary style but also function as communicative tools that deepen meaning, foster critical engagement, and enrich readers' understanding of gender, culture, and ideology in literary discourse.

**Keywords:** Rhetorical Figures; Expressive Literary Style; Filipino Novels in English; Qualitative Analysis; Figurative Language

### INTRODUCTION

This study explored the implications of rhetorical figures as dynamic instruments for influence and effective communication. Rhetoric, derived from the Greek term *rhetorike*, is the art of using language intentionally to shape thought, emotion, and action. Over time, rhetorical studies have evolved globally into a foundational framework for discourse analysis, media communication, and political speech, underscoring their enduring role in shaping public opinion and cultural narratives. As communication modes have expanded through digital technologies, the art of persuasion has adapted to new forms of interaction and audience engagement.

Recent study globally emphasized the quick improvement of communication technologies and platforms, which have broadened the channels and modes of discourse and transformed how persuasion is portrayed. In addition, Mangad (2024) observed that rhetorical applications such as ethos, pathos, and logos remain powerful but are now deliberately converted to digital-age media and local political contexts. Likewise, Martin (2015) pointed up that rhetorical approaches not only to persuade but also to obtain desire and influence cognitive and emotional responses across global media environments. These understandings uphold that rhetoric continues to serve as a powerful communicative force, shaping meaning across various sociocultural domains.

In the Philippine context, rhetoric extends beyond public discourse to penetrate literature, journalism, and oratory traditions. It reveals the Filipino value of eloquence and articulacy in communication while representing cultural identity and collective experience. Local scholars such as Jimenez and Fernandez-Dalona (2020) have



demonstrated how Filipino authors skillfully integrate rhetorical questions, intensifiers, and communal pronouns in fiction to engage readers and project cultural interconnectedness. Building upon these insights, this study locates rhetoric not only as a universal communicative art but also as a specifically Filipino literary and cultural expression that informs both narrative technique and social meaning.

Hence, this study examined the rhetorical features of five selected Filipino novels in English to discover how Filipino authors uniquely utilize rhetorical figures to express persuasion, identity, and cultural nuance. Whilst previous studies have pointed out the general substance of rhetoric in global communication and literature, few have explored its specific indices within Philippine fiction in English. Therefore, the study applies principles to address the gap from Rhetorical Theory (as explained in the Sage Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods which describes rhetoric as concerned with composition, forms, functions, means, venues, producers, audiences, effects and Stylistics (drawing on Manqoush & Al-Wadhaif (2021) work that traces how literary stylistics serves as a critical approach for investigating style, devices and rhetorical effects in texts) to scrutinize how rhetorical approaches in these novels function as instruments of persuasion and meaning-making. In addition, a recent study by Albina (2018) in "Rhetoric and Stylistics in the Function of Written Expressiveness" featured how the connection of rhetorical strategy and stylistic choice influences reader engagement and textual articulacy.

Likewise, Dlamini (2023) mentioned that a rhetorical-stylistic critique of rhetorical questions underscored how such figures served both stylistic and persuasive functions, thus strengthening the methodological significance of combining Rhetorical Theory and Stylistics for literary analysis.

In this study, Rhetorical Theory directed the identification of rhetorical functions (e.g., persuasion, influence, identity-construction) in narrative discourse, while Stylistics provided the analytical tools to examine how those rhetorical functions are completed via linguistic devices, figurative language, tone, and narrative style. They formed together the theoretical-conceptual framework through which the selected Filipino novels are cross-examined: this combined approach empowers the study to map the interplay of rhetorical figure, stylistic execution, and cultural-literary context.

Through this lens, rhetoric was reimagined not simply as a persuasive method but as an informational bridge between global discourse and local literary expression. Rhetorical artistry with a Filipino literary style connection, the study contributed to the broader interpretation of how communication, persuasion, and cultural identity converge in literary practice. Moreover, it aimed to enhance pedagogy by promoting rhetorical awareness in literature instruction and deepening appreciation for the communicative power of Filipino narratives within both local and global contexts.

### Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing body of studies examining rhetoric and stylistic expression in global literature, there remains a limited investigation into how Filipino authors writing in English employ rhetorical figures to create communicative and expressive literary styles. Previous research has often focused on thematic or feminist analyses rather than on rhetorical artistry as a communicative device. This gap underscores the need to explore how rhetorical figures such as metaphor, irony, personification, euphemism, and hyperbole shape literary expression, cultural identity, and reader engagement in Filipino novels written in English. Addressing this problem will contribute to a deeper understanding of how rhetorical devices function not only as aesthetic elements but also as communicative strategies reflective of Filipino thought and experience.

### Research Objectives

#### General Objective:

To examine how rhetorical figures are utilized by Filipino authors in English novels as devices of communicative and expressive literary style.

#### Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the rhetorical figures employed in selected Filipino novels written in English.
2. To analyze how these rhetorical figures contribute to the development of expressive literary style.
3. To determine the communicative functions of rhetorical figures in portraying women's experiences and sociocultural realities.
4. To interpret how the use of rhetorical devices reflects Filipino identity, values, and communicative intent.



## Research Questions

1. What rhetorical figures are used by Filipino authors in the selected English novels?
2. How do these rhetorical figures contribute to the novels' expressive literary styles?
3. In what ways do rhetorical figures function as communicative tools representing women's experiences and Filipino sociocultural contexts?
4. How does the use of rhetorical figures reflect the Filipino authors' identity and artistic intent?

## METHODS

### Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design to probe the rhetorical devices that were employed by authors in selected Filipino novels written in English. This design was considered suitable because it allowed for a comprehensive examination of how rhetorical figures function within literary discourse, emphasizing the meanings, patterns, and stylistic choices embedded in the texts. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2015), qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry that seeks to understand phenomena in their natural contexts, highlighting meaning, interpretation, and lived experience. In this study, the descriptive qualitative approach assisted in the study to interpret rhetorical expressions as they appear in the novels, considering the use of language, tone, and figurative techniques by the authors to persuade and evoke emotion.

Likewise, this design steered both data collection and analysis by focusing on textual reflection and thematic classification of rhetorical elements. Each novel was investigated through close reading and coding procedures, identifying recurring rhetorical figures such as metaphor, irony, and repetition, and interpreting their communicative and cultural implications. Through this approach, the study not only described the rhetorical forms present in Filipino novels in English but also interpreted how these devices contribute to persuasion, identity construction, and literary meaning within the Philippine context.

### Research Instrument

The main research instrument utilized in this study was a rhetorical analysis matrix designed to identify and categorize rhetorical figures found in the selected Filipino novels in English. The matrix included indicators such as the type of rhetorical device, function, contextual meaning, and persuasive effect. To ensure validity and reliability, the instrument underwent expert review by two language and literature professors who evaluated its clarity, comprehensiveness, and alignment with rhetorical theory before it was finalized for use.

Data analysis was directed through organized coding—a process of categorizing and labeling data to identify emerging themes and recurring patterns. Two types of coding were employed: deductive coding, which followed predetermined rhetorical categories based on theory, and descriptive coding, which emerged from observed textual features.

The study explored five Filipino novels written in English, chosen for their thematic content and portrayal of women's experiences. These include: Three Filipino Women by F. Sionil Jose (1999), Magdalena by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard (2016), The Gangster of Love by Jessica Hagedorn (1996), Recuerdo by Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo (1996), and Women in the House by Erna M. Cuizon (2006).

These literary texts were examined to discover the rhetorical strategies employed by their authors in representing women's voices, identities, and struggles within the Filipino socio-cultural context. The matrix and coding procedures together served as the primary instruments in systematically identifying and interpreting rhetorical expressions across the selected novels.

### Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure included selecting five Filipino novels in English. Each text was carefully read and annotated to extract passages containing rhetorical expressions and stylistic devices relevant to the objectives of the study. These excerpts were organized and encoded into the rhetorical analysis matrix, ensuring that all data were systematically prepared for coding and interpretation.

### Data Analysis

The analysis employed logical and descriptive coding based on categories resulting from rhetorical theory and stylistic analysis. Each identified rhetorical device was coded according to its form, function, and communicative intent, after which recurring patterns were clustered into major themes representing persuasive and stylistic



strategies. Inter-rater validation was conducted with a co-rater to strengthen analytical reliability, who independently reviewed the coded data, and differences were reconciled through discussion and consensus.

### Ethics in Research

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. The integrity of the study was maintained by ensuring accurate citation, precision in interpretation, and discretion regarding any unpublished manuscript materials accessed during the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Rhetorical Figures Used by Authors to Produce Expressive Literary Style

Rhetorical figures play a vital role in novels, serving as powerful tools that enhance the depth and resonance of the narrative. The artful utilization of rhetorical figures can transfer complex ideas and themes, engage the imagination of the reader, and create a more immersive and impactful reading experience. These allowed writers to prove inner thoughts and feelings of characters with tone, make abstract concepts tangible, and heighten the dramatic effect of key moments in the story. Ultimately, rhetorical figures are essential in shaping the voice and style of the novel, making the narrative more compelling and memorable. The following are the rhetorical figures writers use in their novels: metaphors, irony, personification, euphemism, and hyperbole, which produce expressive literary styles.

Table 1 presents the rhetorical figure as to metaphor.

Table 1  
 Rhetorical Figure as to Metaphors

Novels	Authors	Frequency of use	Percentage
1.Three Filipino Women	F. Sionil Jose	15	18.29
2.Magdalena	Cecilia Manguerra Brainard	15	18.29
3.Recuerdo	Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo	19	23.17
4.Women in the House	Erna M. Cuizon	15	18.29
5.The Gangster of Love	Jessica Hagedorn	18	21.95

As reflected in Table 1, the highest frequency of metaphors was found in Recuerdo by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, 19 or 23.17 percent occurrences, reflecting her literary style that relies on vivid and expressive imagery to convey complex emotions and themes. This was followed by Jessica Hagedorn's novel The Gangster of Love, which obtained the frequency of use of 18 or 21.95 percent. Hidalgo and Hagedorn's use of metaphor, a figure of speech that describes an object or action that is not literally true but helps explain or make a comparison to highlight an idea, increases the reflective and lyrical quality of their writing, making conceptual ideas such as memory and identity more tangible and emotionally significant for their reader. These are shown in the following sample quoted lines:

"...Don Crisanto Pardo, known to his descendants as"El Kastila." (p.11, Recuerdo)

"...Leonor's story has passed into oblivion." (p.13, Recuerdo)

"...and ignorance is a kind of immaturity." (p. 28, Recuerdo)

"...you can certainly put it away." (p.17, The Gangster of Love)

"...Voltaire was cursed by malevolent spirits." (p.21, The Gangster of Love)

"...and Mrs. Bambang is a sow." (p.29, The Gangster of Love)

As shown in the above lines, both authors utilized metaphors to show societal flaws and cultural tensions in an engaging and thought-provoking manner. Their stylistic intent in using metaphors in their respective novels is geared towards connecting feelings of readers while deepening their understanding of the themes and cultural contexts presented.

In contrast, the lowest frequency of use of metaphor was observed in Three Filipino Women by F. Sionil Jose, Magdalena by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, and Women in the House by Erna M. Cuizon 15 or 18.29 percent occurrences. The authors utilized a more direct and pragmatic rhetorical style, favoring clarity and precision over figurative language. These are reflected in the following quoted lines:



"...She was the prettiest creature I had ever seen, prettier than Miss America or Miss Universe." (p.41, *The Three Filipino Women*)

"...I must admit, the prestige of the UP." (p.4, *The Three Filipino Women*)

"...Dr. Badoc, the perennial woman chaser." (p.46, *The Three Filipino Women*)

"...Magdalena's blood turned into molasses." (p.4, *Magdalena*)

"...the fiery memory of O'Connor was receding from his men's minds." (p.23, *Magdalena*)

"...this place is a menagerie." (p.53, *Magdalena*)

"...the island was where she felt home as a child." (p.65, *Magdalena*)

"...the color of the day was white when it is bright." (p.45, *Women in the House*)

"...her father was a family of hefty males." (p.65, *Women in the House*)

Based on the above sample quoted lines, the novels exhibit the authors' use of metaphors to enhance their literary style by inspiring deeper meaning and emotional tone into their narratives. Metaphors are utilized to clarify abstract ideas, describe characters vividly, or convey cultural and emotional traces that words alone cannot fully encapsulate. For example, the metaphors in *Three Filipino Women* and *Magdalena* often serve to draw comparisons that depict societal or personal issues, using figurative language to emphasize cultural pride, personal struggles, or weak human behavior. Similarly, in *Recuerdo* and *Women in the House*, metaphors are used to enrich the themes of memory, heritage, and identity, providing readers with a lens to interpret the layered complexities of the characters and their experiences. It aligns with Gibss (2017) claims that with cognitive-poetic accounts that metaphors guide readers' viewpoint, emotion, and inference during literary reading, and with work showing that metaphor use can reframe perspective and meaning in discourse, shaping how readers construe social issues and identities (Stockwell, 2019).

Table 2 presents the rhetorical figure of irony.

Table 2  
 Rhetorical Figure as to Irony

Novels	Authors	Frequency of use	Percentage
1. Three Filipino Women	F. Sionil Jose	18	22.5
2. Magdalena	Cecilia Manguerra Brainard	13	16.25
3. Recuerdo	Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo	22	27.5
4. Women in the House	Erna M. Cuizon	14	17.5
5. The Gangster of Love	Jessica Hagedorn	13	16.25

As presented in the table, the highest frequency of use of irony is found in the novel *Recuerdo* by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, with 22 or 27.5 percent of occurrences, followed by F. Sionil Jose's novel *Three Filipino Women*, with 18 or 22.5 percent frequency of use. Their frequent utilization of irony as a rhetorical figure indicates their literary styles that give emphasis to wit and critique societal and personal dynamics, which allows readers to see deeper layers of meaning and provides restrained commentary on human behavior and societal norms. The authors' use of irony exposes contradictions and unspoken truths of their characters in the texts and supports their narratives through themes of memory, identity, and cultural heritage. This is shown in the following quoted lines from the novels *Recuerdo* and *The Three Filipino Women*.

"... She repented her life of sin and decided to go". (p.13, *Recuerdo*)

"...Tia Elisa invariably picked the losers." (p.105, *Recuerdo*)

"... Lola Paz became practically invalid after Lolo Ador was killed." (p.106, *Recuerdo*)

"...Narita could be very quiet. We could be with those books without speaking for hours." (p.5, *Three Filipino Women*)

"...It is a way of the world. (p.8, *Three Filipino Women*)

"...That's just pig blood.. (p.9, *Three Filipino Women*)

On the other hand, the lowest frequency of irony is seen in *Magdalena* by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard and *The Gangster of Love* by Jessica Hagedorn, 13 or 16.25 occurrences, respectively. The authors appear to use irony



carefully to maintain the directness or satire of their storytelling. These are indicated in the following sample quoted lines:

"...It seemed like a sensible plan." (p.5, Magdalena)

"...good and pure. They do not let their wealth get in their way." (p.28, Magdalena)

"...you say our history is past, but our story is not ended". (p.69, Magdalena)

"...no thank you. I prefer instant." (p.21, The Gangster of Love)

"...Voltaire pointed out that the guitar looked just like Jimi's." (p.31, The Gangster of Love)

"...friends came and went, carrying bags of groceries." (p.33, The Gangster of Love)

"... water from the faucet. It's very strong in the morning." (p.49, Women in the House)

"... it's close now, as if you didn't know that." (p. 54, Women in the House)

"... it was disgrace to bring up a bayot into this world." (p.65, Women in the House)

Based on the sample quoted lines, the irony utilized in the novels by the authors reflected the intentional use of this rhetorical figure to present challenges, cultural distinctions, and the complexities of human relationships. They use this rhetorical figure in their respective novels to delicately critique societal norms, reveal hidden truths, and challenge readers' perceptions. Irony shows the gap between appearance and reality, exposing hypocrisies or absurdities in everyday life. The presence of irony in novels enriches the authors' literary style by introducing humor, satire, or poignancy in navigating delicate or contentious themes. This conforms with the statement of Dynel (2017), who stressed that irony serves as a rhetorical strategy that reveals contradictions between appearance and reality, allowing authors to express critique, humor, and social commentary simultaneously. Through this lens, the authors' use of irony in *Recuerdo* and *Three Filipino Women* operates as a subtle narrative tool that exposes societal hypocrisies and deepens readers' engagement with the moral and cultural complexities of Filipino life.

Table 3 presents the rhetorical figure of personification

Table 3  
 Rhetorical Figures as to Personification

Novels	Authors	Frequency of use	Percentage
1.Three Filipino Women	F. Sionil Jose	8	13.3
2.Magdalena	Cecilia Manguerra Brainard	18	30
3.Recuerdo	Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo	12	20
4.Women in the House	Erna M. Cuizon	9	15
5.The Gangster of Love	Jessica Hagedorn	13	21.7

As reflected in Table 3, the highest frequency of use for personification is found in the novel Magdalena by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, with 18 or 30 percent occurrences, followed by The Gangster of Love by Jessica Hagedorn with 13 or 21.7 percent frequency of use. This implies that these two authors opted to use this rhetorical figure more often to give life to inanimate objects or abstract concepts and to deepen the emotional tone of their respective narratives. These are the cited lines indicating the use of personification.

"...her face wore the powdery perfection of Helena Rubenstein." (p.3, Magdalena)

"...saw the paint golden glow of the sky." (p.5, Magdalena)

"...you say our history is past, but the harder she tried, the more exhausted she became until she finally fell asleep." (p.9, Magdalena)

"...a bowler that has passed around." (p.38, The Gangster of Love)

"...Scheherazade was in the picture, rubbing up against my legs." (p.49, The Gangster of Love)

"...the song downstairs fades away." (p.57, The Gangster of Love)



Based on the quoted lines, Brainard and Hagedorn use personification to create vivid imagery by making the intangible ideas active participants in the story, reflecting the emphasis on the connection between characters and their surroundings. Personifications manifested portray the interplay between memory and identity, giving these abstract ideas a tangible presence. Moreover, the above authors use personification to add texture and movement to their scenes and to depict the environment as an integral part of their characters' experiences. This is in line with the ideas of Campbell (2004) that personification is attributing human qualities to non-human things or to an abstract idea to create a more immersive and contemplative reading experience.

Whereas the novel Three Filipino Women by F. Sionil Jose obtains the lowest frequency of use with 8 or 13.3 percent due to his direct approach to writing. This is the sample of quoted lines with the use of personification:

"...and a bleakness was all over the landscape." (p.31, *Three Filipino Women*)  
 "...this is what is dished out to the masses to read." (p.67, *Three Filipino Women*)  
 "...the pouches bulging from under them." (p.51, *Three Filipino Women*)

F. Sionil Jose's limitation in his use of personification was due to his direct storytelling and literal commentary on societal issues, stressing clarity and realism over figurative displays. He used minimal personification in his novel and opted to use direct storytelling in drawing readers into the narrative to forge a connection between the physical world and the internal emotions or themes being explored. This is similar to the novels Recuerdo by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo and Women in the House by Erma Cuizon. There is minimal use of personification as a rhetorical figure in their writings. The following are the sample quoted lines of personification used:

"...Leonor's story, suppressed for generations has passed into oblivion." (p.13, *Recuerdo*)  
 "...The sunbeams dance into the water." (p.67, *Recuerdo*)  
 "...the snowflakes, wisps of white cotton drifting lightly gently down." (p.87, *Recuerdo*)  
 "...the money that came wasn't much." (p.11, *Women in the House*)  
 "...her steps seemed to know where to lead her." (p.53, *Women in the House*)  
 "...but it's crown of tiny leaves were awash, oh my!" (p.54, *Women in the House*)

Like F. Sionil Jose, the two authors, Hidalgo and Cuizon, used personification subtly and sparingly due to their specific, direct style of writing. Frequent use of personification also distracts them in writing their prose. This interpretation is maintained by the findings of Ko (2018), who cited that personification functions as a stylistic mechanism that animates abstraction by ascribing human qualities to non-human entities, thus improving the emotional engagement of the reader and helping to convey complex thematic content.

Table 4 presents the rhetorical figure of euphemism.

Table 4  
 Rhetorical Figure as to Euphemism

Novels	Authors	Frequency of use	Percentage
1.Three Filipino Women	F. Sionil Jose	12	33.3
2.Magdalena	Cecilia Manguerra Brainard	7	19.4
3.Recuerdo	Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo	9	25
4.Women in the House	Erma M. Cuizon	2	5.55
5.The Gangster of Love	Jessica Hagedorn	6	16.7

As indicated in the table, the highest frequency of euphemism is found in the novel Three Filipino Women by F. Sionil Jose, with 12 or 33.3 percent of occurrences, reflecting his literary style that balances truthful societal critique with a level of sensitivity and appropriateness. This is reflective of the cited lines:

"...Father blanched." (p.7, *Three Filipino Women*)  
 "...it was another complicated move." (p.9, *Three Filipino Women*)  
 "...but there is nothing like a younger woman for a middle-aged woman." (p.25, *Three Filipino Women*)



Euphemism is utilized by F. Sionil Jose in his novels to address sensitive topics or harsh realities in a way that softens their impact, allowing readers to engage critically with the themes without being overtly confronted. This is associated with Jose's intent to activate reflection on social and moral issues while maintaining a sense of narrative restraint. This is followed by the novel *Recuerdo* of Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, which obtained a 9 or 25 percent frequency of use. The author uses euphemism to explore deeply the personal or morally complex situations, allowing readers to infer and reflect on the unsaid implications. This is reflected in the cited lines.

"...she repented her life of sin." (p.13)

"...Did she learn to unlove the priest." (p.15, *Recuerdo*)

"...why did no one come to rescue Asuncion." (p.53, *Recuerdo*)

The novel that obtained the lowest frequency had been seen in the novel *Women in the House* by Erma M. Cuizon, with 2 or 5.55 percent occurrences, where the directness and simplicity of the storytelling minimize the need for euphemistic language. Her limited use of euphemism focuses on candid narrative clarity, prioritizing natural validity over the relaxed expressions often found in euphemistic phrasing. This can be viewed in the following sample quoted lines.

"...the place was a block away from an area where there were 'easy' women." (p.14, *Women in the House*)  
"...her steps seemed to know where to lead her." (p.53, *Women in the House*)

On the other hand, Cecilia Manguerra Brainard's novel *Magdalena* garners 7 or 19.4 percent frequency of use while Jessica Hagedorn's novel *The Gangster of Love* obtains 6 or 16.7 percent occurrences.

"...let's go for a ride." (p.36, *Magdalena*)

"...I've never seen so many." (p.37, *Magdalena*)

"...I was aware of this problem, which was why I went out of my way to find a wife in another island." (p.53, *Magdalena*)

"...he was sure some junkie was going to break in and take it." (p.31, *Gangster of Love*)

"...my brush with gonorrhea made me start worrying about worse shit – shit that could kill you." (p.33, *Gangster of Love*)

"...her smile was broad and intimidating." (p.38, *Gangster of Love*)

The above sample quoted lines reflected the attempts of the authors to soften or indirectly address sensitive topics, with their unique literary styles and thematic goals. Euphemisms were used in these novels to present cultural, moral, or societal issues in a way that respects readers' sensibilities while still conveying the intended message. In the novel *Magdalena*, the author Cecilia Manguerra Brainard uses euphemism to address themes of gender, relationships, and societal norms with subtlety, ensuring that the critique does not feel overly sharp. In the novel *The Gangster of Love* by Jessica Hagedorn, euphemisms are used sparingly but effectively, providing a layer of restraint or humor when dealing with provocative or uncomfortable realities.

Euphemisms were utilized by writers as a rhetorical strategy to create tone and maintain a balance between bluntness and sensitivity, reflecting the cultural and emotional contexts in which the stories are established. The experiential high frequency of euphemism in *Three Filipino Women* stresses how the authors utilized indirect wording to address sensitive topics while preserving narrative subtlety. Such usage aligns with arguments of Chi Hao (2013) that euphemistic language allows writers to engage with contentious or taboo subjects in a way that invites reflection without overt confrontation. Similarly, the restrained use of euphemism in *Recuerdo* demonstrates a strategic balancing of moral complexity and literary restraint, where euphemistic phrasing enables readers to infer deeper truths rather than being presented with blunt statements.



Table 5 presents the rhetorical figure of hyperbole.

Table 5  
 Rhetorical Figure as to Hyperbole

Novels	Authors	Frequency of use	Percentage
1.Three Filipino Women	F. Sionil Jose	12	15
2.Magdalena	Cecilia Manguerra Brainard	13	16.25
3.Recuerdo	Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo	19	23.75
4.Women in the House	Erma M. Cuizon	18	22.5
5.The Gangster of Love	Jessica Hagedorn	18	1.5

As presented in Table 5, the highest frequency of use for hyperbole is found in the novel *Recuerdo* by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, with 19 or 23.75 occurrences. As a rhetorical figure, hyperbole is used by the author in writing his novel to develop the narrative's dramatic and reflective tone, supporting themes such as memory, identity, and cultural heritage. This stylistic choice of the author creates a sense of grandeur and depth, allowing readers to engage deeply with the intensified emotional and symbolic aspects of the story. This is followed by the novel *Women in the House* by Erma M. Cuizon, with 18 or 22.5 occurrences.

"...strange going-on in the house." (p.64, *Recuerdo*)

"...he was a lot of fun- a daredevil, a natural leader, and he spent much of his time with Rosario and Paz." (p.70, *Recuerdo*)

"...this was the better alternative to gunning each other down in the streets." (p.99, *Recuerdo*)

"...no last words, no goodbyes." (p.13, *Women in the House*)

"...fourth would be the death of her." (p.42, *Women in the House*)

"...there would be no end to the difficulties of loving people." (46, *Women in the House*)

However, the lowest frequency of use for hyperbole is seen in the novel *Three Filipino Women* by F. Sionil Jose, with 12 or 15 percent occurrences. The minimal dependence on exaggeration reflects his intent to present a reliable and grounded portrayal of characters and themes, favoring realism over dramatic embellishment. This contrast depicts how hyperbole serves different purposes in the novel, that from enhancing emotional resonance to preserving narrative authenticity. This is also true of the novels *Magdalena* by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard and *The Gangster of Love* by Jessica Hagedorn.

"...when she revived, she described how strange she felt and how suddenly everything started to blur and turn black." (p.7, *Three Filipino Women*)

"...a host of giant red ants." (p.8, *Three Filipino Women*)

"...it was a miracle, really, how the marriage could have lasted five years." (p.19, *Three Filipino Women*)

"...saturating every cell of her body with deep melancholia." (p.5, *Magdalena*)

"...you will die if you don't eat. You will die." (p.11, *Magdalena*)

"...he was a big fish, you see, with beautiful coloring, orange and black." (p.15, *Magdalena*)

"...he is trying to buy your love." (p.17, *The Gangster of Love* (Jessica Hagedorn))

"...I'd rather be drown and be eaten by shark." (p.65, *The Gangster of Love* (Jessica Hagedorn))

"...I wasn't interested in competing with White No more." (p.73, *The Gangster of Love*)

The use of hyperbole in the sample quoted lines showcases the authors' intent to enhance emotions, dramatize situations, and intensify characters' experiences. Their purposes in the novels are to exaggerate feelings, actions, or descriptions; to evoke strong reactions from readers, and to emphasize the gravity or absurdity of certain moments. For instance, exaggerations about relationships, personal struggles, or societal conditions are used to reflect the characters' internal conflicts as well as the cultural or emotional landscapes they inhabit. This rhetorical device expands the concerns within the narratives, making the characters' dilemmas and experiences feel larger-than-life. This is in line with the idea of Snellgrove (2018) that writers can use hyperbole to create memorable quotes



and iconic characters; can replace more boring and shopworn phrases with something much more memorable, and a way of helping readers to better understand the overall narrative.

## CONCLUSION

The following are the conclusions established based on the findings of the study:

1. The analysis discovered that Filipino authors utilized a varied range of rhetorical figures—such as metaphor, irony, personification, euphemism, and hyperbole—to enrich their narrative expression. These rhetorical devices served as stylistic markers that enhanced the depth and texture of the novels, shaping readers' emotional engagement and interpretive understanding.
2. The rhetorical figures connected in the novels contribute significantly to each author's distinct literary style. Through the methodical use of figurative language, the authors increase imagery, develop tone, and evoke reflective and affective responses. The findings demonstrate that rhetorical expression is not merely ornamental but integral to the creation of narrative rhythm, atmosphere, and symbolic resonance, allowing the novels to achieve aesthetic balance between realism and imagination.
3. The rhetorical devices investigated also functioned as communicative tools for representing women's experiences and the broader Filipino sociocultural context. Figures of speech such as metaphor and personification gave voice to women's inner emotions, societal struggles, and cultural identities, while irony and euphemism served as rhetorical means to critique social norms and moral expectations. Thus, rhetoric becomes an interpretive channel through which authors articulate gendered realities and cultural narratives in subtle yet powerful ways.
4. The use of rhetorical figures in the novels embodies the cultural identity and artistic consciousness of Filipino authors. Through rhetorical creativity, they mirror the complexities of Filipino life—its humor, resilience, faith, and social contradictions—while preserving a uniquely Filipino sensibility in English literary expression. The strategic employment of rhetoric reveals an artistic intent to both engage and challenge readers, demonstrating that Philippine literature in English continues to serve as a bridge between global literary tradition and local cultural articulation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations:

1. Future researchers may expand the study by conducting comparative analyses between Filipino novels in English and those written in Filipino or other regional languages to explore how rhetorical expression varies across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Similar frameworks can also be applied to poetry, drama, or creative nonfiction to further contextualize the role of rhetoric in Philippine literary production.
2. The results of this study may be integrated into the teaching of literature, stylistics, and rhetorical analysis in both secondary and tertiary levels. By examining rhetorical figures as communicative and cultural instruments, teachers can help students appreciate how language shapes human experience, thereby strengthening critical reading and interpretive competence.
3. Filipino authors and creative writers may use the findings as a reflective guide in crafting narratives that employ rhetorical devices not merely for embellishment but as meaningful vehicles for social commentary and identity formation. Such awareness of rhetorical function can enhance both artistic intention and cultural representation.
4. The study also recommends that future research examine the intersection of rhetoric, gender, and national identity. Investigating how rhetorical strategies shape portrayals of women, family, and community in literature can contribute to broader discourses on Filipino cultural values, postcolonial identity, and feminist literary criticism.

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