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Social Masks and Identity Construction in Lualhati Bautista's Bata... Pa'no Ka Ginawa?

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ABSTRACT

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, combining textual analysis with cultural and socio-cultural perspectives, to investigate the portrayal of social masks, identity construction, and resilience in Lualhati Bautista's novels, focusing on "Bata, Bata... Pa'no Ka Ginawa?" The study explores how selected characters navigate social roles, adopt personas, and engage in impression management within Filipino society. Through close reading and theoretical interpretation using Goffman's and Mead's frameworks, the research uncovers insights into the intricate dynamics of identity construction, social interaction, and resilience depicted in Bautista's narratives. Significant findings include resilience among characters and its intersection with identity construction and social interaction. Additionally, the study reveals the influence of cultural norms, historical events, and socio-economic factors on characters' identity construction and resilience strategies. It also highlights moments of authenticity, vulnerability, and resistance, analyzing how they challenge or reinforce social masks and identity performances. Overall, the research contributes to understanding the complexities of Filipino identity and resilience in contemporary society as portrayed in literature.

KEYWORDS

Identity Construction; Social Mask; Negotiating Reality; Resilience.

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INTRODUCTION

Social changes such as economic and globalization and international mobility led to cultural diversity among people, which was reflected in different social institutions (Campbell, 2020). The consequence of this diverse question's identity and representation pervaded daily interactions in contemporary society. Urbanization, migration, and globalization threaten the stability of social identities and collective representation (Howarth, 2002). Identities are presumed diverse, complex, and depending on the situation. Therefore, all identities are social, including personal identities experienced as unique. The construction of identities is part of the process through which social divisions and inequalities are established and reinforced (Taylor, 2015).

Developing an identity is an impact of one's ability to adapt to the symbolic and social boundaries that exist within society. Through this social interaction, individuals learn which groups will allow them to associate with and their boundaries, prestige, resources, and advantages (Eisen et al., 2015). Hence, the process of identity formation is problematic, as this creates stigma among social identities and thus creates a system of stratification that only privileged people can avail (Goffman, 2009).

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