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## Cruelty and Violence Hits the Nation

**Dominador Castaneda, Doomed Family, 1945, Oil on canvas, Manila**



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Since it was painted during the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, it depicts how Japanese army tortures inhabitants. A mother lies dead on the floor with her long hair capped with blood. Also, her breast is exposed which suggests that she was sexually harassed. In addition, the father, bound in a rope, appears tortured because of the scars and blood on his back. A boy, startled and frightened, seems helpless as his parents are oppressed in front of him (Silva, 2007). The

painting intends to convey the idea of what the Japanese did to the Filipino family, as many citizens have died at that time. The artist is also saying that we should take note and remember the sacrifices made by our brave fellow countrymen to gain back freedom (Hasso, 2014).

The painting is entitled "Doomed Family" perhaps because they were lifeless and hopeless at that moment. They are the innocent people whose lives are bound to be taken away. The family has been experiencing rampant cruelty and torture. And, the child screams helplessly as he is uncertain of his upcoming death.

**Dominador Castaneda, Death March, 1948, Oil on canvas, Manila**



“Death March” is also another eye-catching painting that shows how the Filipinos were being tortured during the death march in Bataan. As can be seen in the painting, the natives were in line and are to walk miles away via foot. We know how sorrowful it feels to be forced to walk endlessly. They were Filipino prisoners who strived hard to withstand all kinds of sufferings. The three men lying on the

floor exhibits the ones who did not make it to the end. Throughout the death march, they could experience dehydration, starvation, exhaustion, and injuries, however, some of our fellowmen still made it to the end. Also, it features harsh physical abuse and merciless exploitation of mankind. It occurred in the Philippines, which means that there is an extreme heat temperature that is threatening to the flesh. It can be seen that the people are holding each other to gain support and encouragement to go on.



**Dominador Castaneda,  
Ravaged Manila, February  
1945, Oil on canvas, Manila**

“Ravaged Manila” seems to be a town washed by bloody war and brutality. It shows a glimpse of how Manila was during the post-war. The innocent children lying breathless on the ground are wretched. They do not deserve

the cruelty of the world. The woman who appears to be naked explains how she was sexually

abused and relentlessly killed. The people who are going to the same direction suggest that they were the survivors of the war. They seem to be saving what they can and are crying for help that they could possibly acquire. Also, a soldier's willingness to help and assist those in need implies his unconditional love and service for his countrymen. On the other hand, the place looks completely destroyed and will be unable to stand as a shelter for the natives at the moment.

Dominador Castaneda is a painter and a writer who was born in 1904. He completed his degree of Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines at twenty (Artes De Las Filipinas, 2017). The three paintings are found in the National Museum. The paintings capture real life events that occurred in our country. They are highly symbolical and they all contemplate how we should honor our fellow countrymen. It shows how blessed we are to be born in this generation where freedom is already handed to us. We do not need to give up our life and comfort for freedom. We must not only be aware of their sacrifices but also continue to show our gratitude to them. The three paintings illustrate the art of Nationalism. Although they show brutality and darkness of humanity, it still resembles Filipino Heroism.

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