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## **Pusong Walang Pag-ibig, by Reyes**

Review Author: Soledad S. Reyes

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mitting oneself to helping the country is not a monopoly of only one class. The novel shows a stratification of society, how members of particular classes have committed themselves to work for better government, for peace, for justice."

Uranza (M.A. in Literature from the University of the Far East, teacher at Far Eastern University and the University of the Philippines) is presently working on a second novel entitled "The Lotus Eaters." She says it is not exactly a sequel to *Bamboo In The Wind*. It is set in the year 1987 and here, she says, "I try to search for answers to the questions: Did we realize that what we were really hungering for in 1972 was peace, human rights, justice and better government? Did we really change?" Readers and critics will look forward anxiously to the publication of Uranza's second novel, for with her first—*Bamboo In the Wind*—she has established herself at the forefront of Filipino writers in English. In *Bamboo In the Wind*, Arcellana says, she has "created a virtual world, thoroughly believable, fulfilling, solidly satisfying." (*Manila Chronicle*, 21 November 1990). Uranza has succeeded where Casper says all historical novelists must succeed—in "man's flesh and bones where the events of history are etched." Uranza's creation of that historical-literary world with such competence, compassion and style gives promise of good things to come.

Joseph A. Galdon, S.J.  
English Department  
Ateneo de Manila University

**Pusong Walang Pag-ibig.** By Roman Reyes. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1990. xxvi, 197 pages.

For a large number of Tagalog novelists, the events in the last decade of Spanish rule were appropriate materials for their art. It was as if by returning to the recent past which they had actually experienced, they could relive those momentous occasions not only in their lives but in the life of a whole society. Roman Reyes' *Pusong Walang Pag-ibig* is one such work that drew on actual historical events between the 1890s and the 1900s for the context of a literary work.

The novel starts rather slowly and deliberately as it tries to establish the individuating characteristics of its protagonist Enrique, a nineteen-year-old man endowed with handsome looks and a glib tongue, who is able to speak Spanish, and is a real charmer as far as a great number of ladies are concerned. Without any visible means of support, he sponges off an old couple who have decided to adopt him.

Faced with a lawsuit and in mortal fear for his life because of his indiscretions, Enrique accepts the offer of Tandang Tikong for him to marry

Loleng, a twenty-seven-year-old woman. There is no love here, but because her duty beckons, she consents to marry him. The small inheritance she receives from her father slowly disappears as Enrique indulges in his favorite vice—gambling. They have a daughter, Elisa, who grows up not knowing what it means to have a father.

The novel's action accelerates in the second half as it focuses simultaneously on both the personal and public lives of the characters. Details drawn from history—the outbreak of the revolution in 1896, the bloody encounters between the Katipunan members and the Spanish soldiers, the dislocation of a large number of families fleeing from the war—are piled one on top of another. An extremely poignant scene is based on the bloody massacre that took place in Kakarong in Bulacan.

Loleng and Elisa decide to leave their town in order to escape the fierce battles. But the two are separated and for several years Loleng searches for her daughter. These events are contextualized against the first years of the Americanization process. Loleng finally finds Elisa in the house of a kind doctor and his wife who, taking pity on Loleng, offer her their hospitality. The whole family is reunited when Loleng and Elisa have a final glimpse of the dying Enrique, who has been run over by a speeding automobile while on his way to see his family.

Clearly, the loveless heart in the title refers to Enrique, a man who is incapable of loving anybody except himself. His decision to join the Revolution is prompted by his desire to escape the responsibility of being a father and a husband. What this novel depicts is not any romantic hero but an anti-hero whose greed, covetousness, and rapacity serve to feed his own monstrous ego. He is the villain without any hope of redemption and he is made to function in the narrative as a character who must never be emulated.

Indeed, what the novel presents is a gallery of types: characters who are made to symbolize certain human weaknesses and strengths. The lines between the good and evil individuals are clearly marked and no room left for any kind of ambiguity in the depiction of these characters. Loleng is the paragon, the patient, meek and mild wife, foil to the dissolute husband and father. The exception in this simplistic view of character is discernible in the homosexual who falls in love with Enrique. *Pusong Walang Pag-ibig* is significant for its portrayal of this type of character who comes out comic in some scenes and pathetic in other situations, especially when he realizes that Enrique has exploited his blind love.

*Pusong Walang Pag-ibig* is important for the preeminence it has given history as a subject matter—not as an abstraction, but as lived by different subjects whose actions have been determined by forces beyond their control. History comes alive in certain scenes in the novel that describe, with sleuth-like fidelity to details, the impact of the Revolution on the lives of the town folk. The re-creation of the confusion wrought by the war is also

rendered in vivid images and sharp impressions. Even the Americanization of Manila is most fully recounted, but always in terms of the situations the characters have found themselves in. The novel leaves the impression of a text concerned with freezing for posterity these sights and sounds that characterize a specific period in history.

Moreover, the novel is deemed crucial in the further development of realism as a mode of representation. Roman Reyes' superb eye for details of language and gesture is clearly manifested in this novel where the everyday activities of a whole community constitute an engrossing series of related vignettes. Like the *costumbrista* writers, Reyes trained his sights on the particular and unique qualities of the community that serves as the stage for the unfolding of his drama. In *Pusong Walang Pag-ibig* Roman Reyes can lay claim to being one of the foremost realists of his generation.

Soledad S. Reyes  
Department of Filipino  
Ateneo de Manila University

**Beginnings of the Filipino Dominicans.** By Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa O.P. Manila: Dominican Province of the Philippines, 1991. 289 pages.

Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa O.P. is a writer, philosopher and historian with a degree in Theology from the Katholieke University of Leuven in Belgium. He is at present Rector Magnificus of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila.

Understandably, writing and publishing a dissertation on the history of the Filipinization of the religious orders, specifically the Dominican order, is a ticklish task. The problem is to "resolve the reason behind the late emergence of the native Dominicans in the Philippines," exploring and probing, digging through massive data from archival and non-archival sources, even those he barely had access to and considered well-guarded secrets of the order, finally providing a systematic historical study of the origin, as well as the development of the Filipino Dominican Order, from the Spanish period up to the eventual establishment of the Dominican Province of the Philippines.

The objective ultimately was to view this issue of the late beginning and retarded growth of native secular clergy and religious in the Spanish colonies with proper understanding and incisive interpretation, to provide fresher insights into a problem that had "mystified missiologists for a long time," quoting the author, and, most importantly, to facilitate a bonding among all Dominicans in the Philippines, working as they all are towards the same goal and cause.