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Jun Cruz Reyes

Ka Amado

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desire for mere articulation by engaging in the discourses of democratization and social transformation. The book serves to piece together a history of torture in the modern period and offers a commentary on how society has responded to the issues that torture and impunity have raised. The violent scenes in Abu Ghraib and other interrogation camps cannot be seen as either isolated or contemporary in character. They are part of a global historical narrative on the use of physical and psychological violence to achieve political ends. As McCoy cautions, both state and social actors must be aware of the price the world pays for its disregard of the moral and ethical questions on torture and the continued impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of torture.

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JUN CRUZ REYES

Ka Amado

Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2012. 424 pages.

Jun Cruz Reyes takes a new approach in writing his latest literary gem, *Ka Amado*. He uses a historico-biographical style not only to narrate Amado V. Hernandez's life but also to elicit from the reader an appreciation for the importance of geography in shaping individuals and society. Reyes presents literature as a reconstruction of history based on collective memory. He argues that personal experiences are products of human interaction with the environment, which also serves as a means of developing social awareness. Literature as history is thus a codification of human experiences.

Reyes contends that the physical environment and sociohistorical aspects of Tondo and Hagonoy, two key places in Hernandez's life, are sources of information to deepen one's understanding of Hernandez's personal experiences. Hernandez was born on 13 September 1903 in Daang Juan Luna, Gagalangin Tondo. His parents, Juan Hernandez of Hagonoy and Clara Vera of Baliuag, were both natives of Bulacan province.

On the one hand, Tondo was, according to Reyes, his idealization of *bayan and kasaysayan* (nation and history). Historically it has been a locus of anticolonial uprisings, from the Battle of Bangkusay in 1571 and the rebellion of Sulayman and Lakandula in 1574 to the formation of La Liga Filipina and the Katipunan in 1892, as well as the founding of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas in 1930, which Reyes mistakenly dated 1932 (67). On the other hand, Hagonoy served as Hernandez's inspiration for his major works, and his parents influenced him to use the imagery of Bulacan province in his literary pieces (96). Thus, *Ka Amado* is not just a biography but a work on social history that depicts struggles and revolution in connection with a society's particular geography.

Reyes is the author of critically acclaimed works such as *Isang Lumang Kuwento* (1973), *Tutubi, Tutubi . . . Huwag Kang Magpahuli sa Mamang Salbahe* (1987), *Utos ng Hari at Iba Pang Kuwento* (2002), and *Etsa-Puwersa* (2000). His humor and satire in these works, apart from his usual free creative writing workshops for young writers, have made him popular among Filipino readers. In contrast to this earlier genre, *Ka Amado* features Reyes's attempt at writing a biography. Himself a son of Hagonoy, Reyes was interested in analyzing how Hernandez's life, works, and political struggle were influenced by his and his father's hometown.

As mentioned, one of the distinguishing features of *Ka Amado* is its emphasis on the role of the environment in shaping one's life. Reyes's description of the geography of Hagonoy and Tondo provides the backdrop for an analysis of the socioeconomic conditions of Hernandez, and Filipinos in general, across different historical periods. Geographical analysis in the context of Reyes's work is therefore no longer an end in itself but a means to rediscover the slow unfolding of structural realities, to see things from the perspective of a Braudelian *longue durée*. Reyes believes that Hagonoy inspired Hernandez in his literary works such as the poem "Bayang Malaya" and "Sagrada Familia." In "Bayang Malaya" Hagonoy is the source for the different images of land and water, while "Sagrada Familia" refers to an actual place in the said town. Reyes even asserts that the place Pinagbangunan Hernandez mentions in "Bayang Malaya" is actually Sagrada Familia. Malayak and Patining are the old names of Sagrada Familia. The place name Malayak comes from a word that denotes the portion of a river that is connected to the sea, which, in the case of Hagonoy, is the meeting point of Manila Bay and the Pampanga River; while Patining refers to the end

portion of the barrio (96). Like other early Tagalog communities, this area developed near the river or the sea where most of the people's activities relied on, including transportation and trade. The different creeks or inlets of Hagonoy connected it to other provinces such as Pampanga, Bataan, and Zambales.

The said provinces were also parts of the communities from where Hernandez's ascendants came. Tracing Hernandez's lineage, Reyes reveals that Hernandez was related to the poet Francisco "Balagtas" Baltazar and, by consanguinity, the *ilustrado*-propagandists Marcelo H. del Pilar and Jose Ma. Panganiban. Reyes even goes further in Hernandez's genealogy by connecting it to Hagonoy's geography. Reyes mentions that Sagrada Familia was situated between Marulao (Santa Elena) and Bangus (Santo Niño), which were part of the old Hagonoy (Matandang Hagunoy), two places that have deep connections with early anticolonial uprisings. Marulao is the birthplace of generations of *principalia* who traced their lineage to Sulayman and Lakandula, who was said to be the ruler of Hagonoy. Bangus, at the time of Spanish contact, was ruled by Magat Salamat, a key figure in the 1587 Tondo Conspiracy (97).

Reyes emphasizes that different historical events shaped Hernandez's personality and his political orientation, especially in relation to his struggle against social injustices particularly in the labor sector. Hernandez was initially an idealist; he wrote poems and stories pertaining to admiration for women, relationships, and family. Proof of this argument is his collection of early short stories, which include "Magpinsan" (1924), "Liham na Lihim" (1924), "Kay Saklap" (1925), and "Nasawing Bulaklak" (1925). However, his personal experiences under colonial rule changed the trajectory of his literary style from romantic to realist. Reyes points out that the period of Hernandez's professional, intellectual, and political maturity was an era of social protest that spanned the 1920s campaign for Philippine independence and the Commonwealth-era Social Justice program of Pres. Manuel Quezon. Social injustice, corruption, human rights violations, and poverty inspired Hernandez to write about the ills of Philippine society. One can argue that his most well-known works, such as "Bayang Malaya" (1955), "Isang Dipang Langit" (1973), and the novels *Mga Ibong Mandaragit* (1969), and *Luha ng Buwaya* (1972), spoke of his personal struggles and his changing perceptions on society.

The socioeconomic and political context of Hernandez's life increased his social awareness. During the Japanese occupation, he joined the Bernard Anderson guerrilla group, which operated in the Sierra Madre mountain range area. He was given a rank of major and served as a spy against the Japanese. After the war, he became vocal in his anti-collaborator stance. He was dismayed by how Filipinos participated in hoarding, profiteering, and black-market activities during the occupation years. However, US intervention in the collaboration issue, as well as in the economics and politics of the newly independent Philippine nation-state, led him to develop anti-American sentiments (186–87). Furthermore, his desire to turn his literary ideas into reality resulted in his participation in progressive organizations, especially labor groups. In 1947 he was elected president of the Congress of Labor Organizations (CLO). As president he strengthened the CLO through organizational affiliations, educational training of members, and mass demonstrations. From this point onwards, Hernandez's continuing radicalization was clearly reflected in his political activities and social involvement.

In *Ka Amado*, Reyes analyzes Philippine society through the prism of Hernandez's biography. He also uses the geography of Tondo and Hagonoy and explores the relationship between people and their environment to gain a deeper understanding of sociohistorical conditions. *Ka Amado*, therefore, is a "total history" presented through Hernandez's literature.

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MARLIES S. SALAZAR

Perspectives on Philippine Languages: Five Centuries of European Scholarship

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2012. 333 pages.

Marlies Salazar's *Perspectives on Philippine Languages* condenses the history of European scholarship on culture and language by gathering archival documents from the sixteenth up to the second half of the twentieth century