



A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino: An Elegy in Three Scenes

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Originally published in 1966 - this is a recent reprint of the play in English.

A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino: An Elegy in Three Scenes Details

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Diane says

04/03/12

makes me nostalgic for a Manila that I never knew.

Randel Diaz says

I need this on my Philippine Literature.

Joyzi says

It's a great mystery how I was able to write a movie script with only reading the first half of this play.

Well that's the magic of google and goodreads.

And really why on earth students have to read and even made movie adaptation out of this one, is really beyond me.

Trixie Torren says

i need this on my report

Rhea says

Pure genius.

Jethro Ponce says

potassium

Rise says

Ang huling dula sa serye ng apat na "Entablado Klasiko", mga de-kalidad na salin sa wikang Filipino ni

Bienvenido Lumbera at nilimbag ng Ateneo de Manila University Press. Kuwento ng magkapatid na Candida at Paula, mga dalagang napaglipasan na ng panahon at nakatira sa isang lumang bahay sa Intramuros kasama ang kanilang matandang ama at kilalang batikang pintor na si Don Lorenzo Marasigan. Ipininta ni Don Lorenzo ang isang larawang may pamagat na Retrato del Artista como Filipino (A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino), isang napakasimbolikong litrato tungkol sa alaala ng lumipas na gustong takasan ng mga tauhan. Lahat ng nakamamalas ng retrato ay nagbibay ng sari-saring interpretasyon nito bagamat lahat sila ay tinatamaan ng di maipaliwanag na mensahe ng larawan. Halos lahat ng tumitingin dito ay nakakaramdam ng galit. Tila ito nang-uuyam na konsensiya ng isang artista. Gustong bilingin ng mga banyagang kolektor pati na ng gobyerno sa napakataas na halaga ang retrato subalit ayaw ibenta ng dalawang magkapatid. Maganda ang pagkakasalin at masasabing ang dulang ito, bagamat may ilang pariralang hindi gaanong matatas, ay natural na natural sa wikang Filipino.

Mapapanood sa Youtube ang pelikulang halaw sa orihinal na Ingles at dinirehe ng pambansang alagad ng sining na si Lamberto V. Avellana: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J933j...>

Mapapanood rin ang napakagaling na musikal na halaw ni Rolando Tinio at nilapatan ng himig ni Ryan Cayabyab: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjRqg...>

Michael says

As a true Manileno, Manila is the usual setting of Nick Joaquin's stories. This time he sang a nostalgic song about the Manila of old, the Manila we barely knew or imagined. In this play, Joaquin sang of its ancient grandeur which is now sadly lost and devastated by the waves of modernism.

This story is abundant of critical themes: clash between tradition and modernity, battle between old and new, a Filipino as divided being and struggling in his hybrid soul, art for art's sake, and the concept of national identity.

Highly recommended!

K.D. Absolutely says

The famous local English play *A Portrait of an Artist as Filipino (An Elegy in Three Series)* was written by **Nick Joaquin** in 1951 and was first published in a book form in 1966. It has been staged several times with either radio talents, professional actors or amateur actors including students in high school classrooms. In fact, in my book's 1966 edition's Foreword, written by another famous Filipino artist, **Lamberto V. Avellana**, he said that this work did not need any foreword as it had been dramatized over the radio, staged in practically all barangays throughout the city (Manila) and has been filmed by **Manuel de Leon**, an incorrigible patron of Filipino art. However, revisions had been made to suit the limitations of those radio/stage plays and movie. Fortunately, my edition has the original play: full blown, uncut, free from dictates of half-hours of radio, the two hours of stage, and the one-and-a-half hours of screen.

The play is about Manila before the outbreak of World War II. The **Marasigan family** composed of the dying **Don Lorenzo el Magnifico** and his two spinster daughters, 43-y/o **Candida** and 40-y/o **Paula** are still living in their old ancestral house located inside Intramuros, the walled city located inside the city. The house

is already in its decayed state and the two daughters are now collecting bills. Candida has a talent on catching rats so she applies at the Bureau of Health as a Chief of Rat Control but she is suspected by the government people as a government spy. Paula, on the other hand, knows how to play the piano and speaks Spanish so she displays poster in front of the house for interested students. However, both plans go kaput. Their only hope now is to sell the famous painting that their dying father painted and given to them as a gift called "Portrait of an Artist as Filipino." The characters in the painting are **Aeneas** carrying at his back his father **Anchises** as they flee the burning Troy.

However, instead of the actual faces of these Greek mythological characters are the actual faces of young and old Lorenzo. So, it is like the young Lorenzo carrying the now old himself. An American painting collector is interested to buy it for \$1,000 which during that time translates to P2,000 and is enough for Paula and **Tony Javier**, their lodger, the to go to Europe and see Spain, Italy and France.

The play is divided into 3 scenes:

THE FIRST SCENE – Candida and Paula meet again, after more than 10 years, **Bitoy** a son of one of their papa's regular visitors during Sunday's *terulias*. Tony arrives and is followed by members of media who are asking to see the painting. They want to borrow the painting (*that reminded me of The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde*) for exhibition in an art gallery but the sisters do not agree.

THE SECOND SCENE – The Marasigans are visited by the an old-time friend family headed by **Senator Perico**. During the visit, the elder Marasigans, **Manolo** and **Pepang**, are also there. They all want the sisters to donate the painting to the government, the two to live with their elder siblings while getting pension money from the government and for Don Lorenzo to be taken to the hospital. Again, the sisters do not agree.

THE THIRD SCENE – The portrait is gone. Why? Who took it? Who is Tony to the sisters? How do the sisters feel for each other? They've been living together all their lives but do they really love each other? Is Don Lorenzo, who has not been seen since the start of Scene 1, really inside the bedroom? Is he still alive or already dead? What will happen to the three of them if they will not leave the house and the Japanese comes to invade the city?

Well written local play in English. The structure is solid and the storytelling is flawless. The chronology of events including the revelations in the Third Scene is engrossing that you'll read until the end so you'll find out the final fate of the Marasigan family. The use of the Old Manila, *the old glorious Manila when \$1=P2*, is really captivating that you can't help but us: "what have *they* done wrong?" It is also multi-faceted: it tackles the issues of national sovereignty, the class systems, i.e., the indifferent rich bourgeois families versus the mass proletariat, the role of art and culture in the building of the nation, the role of mass media in social awareness, etc.

First local play in English that I read from cover to cover and I can't help but admire it. I hope to watch this play sometime soon.
