



Amoroso: Artist as Illustrator

September 24, 2008– April 4, 2009

Lopez Memorial Museum





The exhibition ***Tell-Tale: The Artist as Storyteller*** features selected illustrations done by National Artist Fernando Amorsolo (1872-1972) for works of 20th century Filipino writers-editors such as Inigo Ed. Regalado, Severino Reyes, Lope K. Santos and Camilo Osias.



Definition

- An **illustration** is a visualization such as a drawing, painting, photograph or other work of art that stresses subject more than form. (Wikipedia).



- In this exhibition, the illustrations are mostly drawings. Many people know the paintings of artist Fernando Amorsolo and some of his sketches which appeared in the book *Amorsolo Drawings* (published by the Lopez Museum). The works on exhibit show “whimsy, an imaginative dexterity” among others. Before visiting the museum, you may want to review the sketches of Amorsolo in the abovementioned book. You can discuss his use of lines, light and shadow, etc. You may also compare his works with that of Spanish painter Diego Velasquez (1599-1660) whose works are believed to have influenced Amorsolo. You may also name some artists who did many drawings like Bencab, Vicente Manansala, etc. and show their orks exhibited in other museums or featured in books.



Functions of Illustrations

Pictures that influence

The Smithsonian Institution Libraries noted that
“Authors often include illustrations in their
publications to strengthen a particular point of
view, and individual artists have greatly
influenced the stylistic development of books.”



Fernando Amorsolo



- illustrated the following
- *Madaling Araw* by Inigo Regalado
- *Parusa ng Diyos* by Severino Reyes
- *The Philippine Readers* by Camilo Osias
- *Ganito Pala ang Maynila* by Lope K. Santos
- Compare and contrast his illustrations in these literature with his paintings in terms of subject matter, style, etc.
- You may discuss collaboration in art. In which field of art does collaboration happen more often? In which period in art history do collaboration happen? Which artists have collaborated? Why did they collaborate? What were the results of their collaborations?
- Have your class write an essay on this: What happens when images are emptied of meaning? (This would mean you would have to discuss how images have meaning. Refer to Alice Guilleramos' *Image to Meaning*)



- You can use the materials in www.sil.si.edu/exhibitions/PicturingWords/PW_influence.cfm
- Have your students bring their favorite illustrated books. Ask them why they enjoyed these illustrated books. Ask them what ideas the books imparted to them and whether or not the illustrations helped affirm these ideas.
- You can invite some members of the Ilustrador ng Kabataan (<http://ink.group.ph>) or of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (scbwphilasia@yahoo.com) to discuss the challenge and rewards of doing books and book illustrations for children. You may also arrange for a storytelling session (contact Ayo Noval at 5354689) with Alitaptap Storytellers (they also give workshops on storytelling).
- What other functions do you see/imagine illustrations in books fulfill Can you give examples of book illustrations that do so?



- In the introduction of Ateneo de Manila's reprint of *Madaling Araw*, Soledad Reyes discusses some of the means by which the text was modernized (see pp. 3-5). You may divide your Filipino/language class into five groups and have them work on one strategy each for another text which would need modernizing.
- You may also invite someone from the Sentro ng Wikang Filipino (telefax: 9244747, 9818500 loc. 4503, 4265838) to discuss modernization of the Filipino language – why is there a need to modernize, how does one modernize, what is the effect of the modernization of language, and how far have the different Filipino languages been modernized.



Soledad Reyes writes that a book is a product of many elements & forces. One can see this as a) a story, b) a historical narrative, c) a compendium of discussions on political issues, d) as a guide to life, e) a personal vision of related/interconnected aspects of life in the 1st decade of the 20th century.



Have your students name the books that fulfill two or more of the abovementioned. Do these have illustrations? Which parts are illustrated? How has the illustrations helped or hindered in making the books such?



- Pictures to inspire
- According to the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, sacred texts –texts considered to be sacred or of central importance to religious traditions -- were illustrated to “express the spiritual and religious aspirations of believers in many cultures.”



- In the Philippines, there are many faiths that inspire their people to action. Some of these faiths are the Christian faith, Islamic faith, Buddhist faith, as well as the indigenous faiths of the country's various inhabitants.
- Which of these faiths have sacred texts?
- What do they call their sacred texts?
- Are their sacred texts illustrated?
- Do we know who illustrated these sacred texts? Your library might have copies of these texts. If possible, compare & contrast illustrations of different sacred texts.

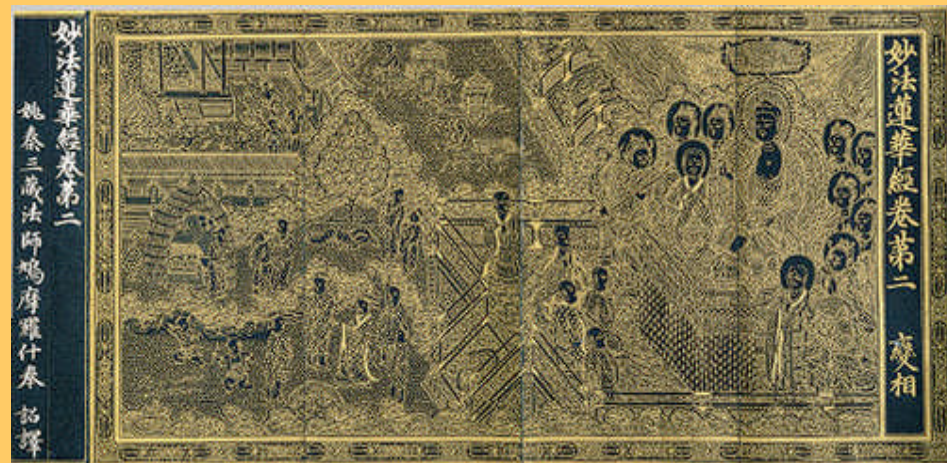


- Some more known sacred texts include the Bible for Christians, the Qu'ran of Islam, the Vedas for Hindus, the Tao Te Ching of Taoism, and the Torah of Judaism.
- What are other sacred texts?
- How are the sacred texts revealed to the believers?
- (You can access www.youtube.com for some examples of how the sacred texts are read.
<http://www.bl.uk/learning/cult/sacredtexts/index.html> is also an interesting source for other discussion points.)

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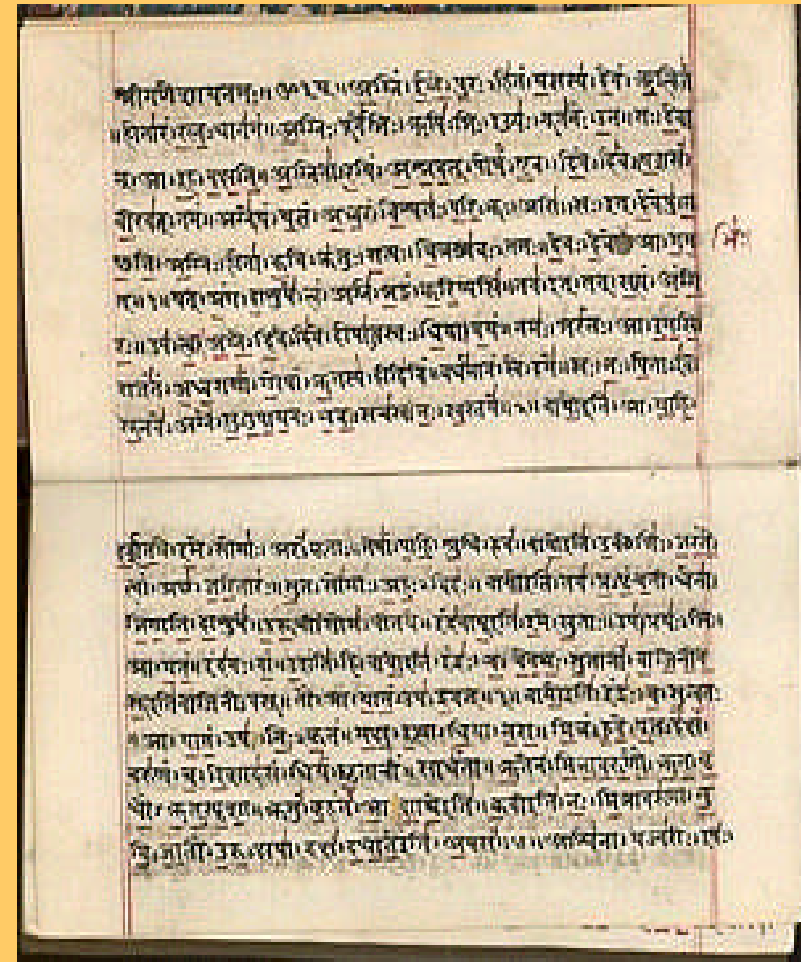
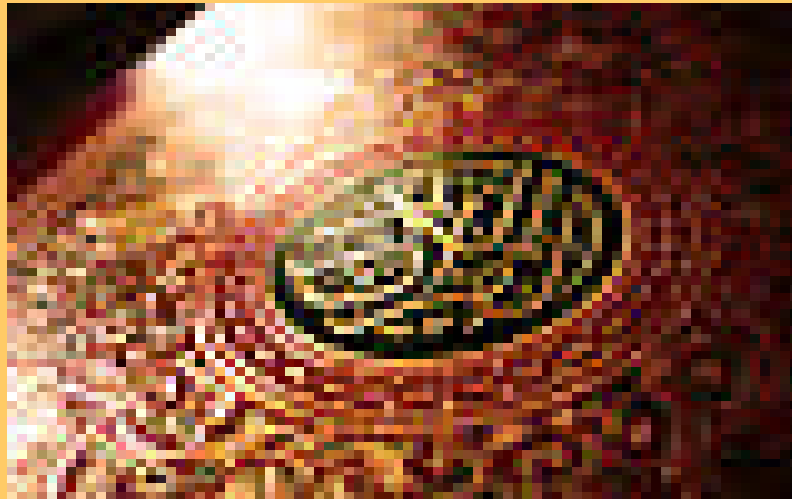


On the left is an example of a psalter & below is an illustrated manuscript of the ***Lotus Sutra***. What spiritual & religious aspirations are expressed in these illustrations?



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Identify the sacred texts below





- Pictures that inform
- These would refer to illustrations used in travel/geography book, science books such as that of biology, botany, etc.

Amoroso

Below are illustrations from *Flora de Filipinas* by Fr. Blanco, and from the *Boxer Codex*.





The *Flora de Filipinas* lists down 1081 species and details their uses, including medicinal uses.

- Have your students compare the number of species of plants then & now. You can also visit the National Museum (open Wed-Sunday 8am-4pm; 5270278) to see samples of the different flora of the Philippines. Discuss whether or not there is an increase or a decrease in the number and the reasons why. A resource person from the DENR (web@denr.gov.ph or 9281178) may be invited to speak on the issue. As for the medicinal uses of plants, you can invite a resource person on alternative medicine (UP-PGH has a department of alternative medicine) or on natural medicine to discuss the matter. You can also have your students debate on homeopathy. You can also contact Dr Jun Lit ([09194797709](tel:09194797709)/junlit@hotmail.com) of UPLB to have a workshop on scientific drawing)



The ***Boxer Codex*** is described by Alfredo Roces as “a manuscript written circa 1595 which contains illustrations of Filipinos at the time of their initial contact with the Spanish. Aside from a description of and historical allusions to the Philippines and various other Far Eastern countries, it also contains seventy-five colored drawings of the inhabitants of these regions and their distinctive costumes. Fifteen illustrations deal with Filipinos.”



- In the Boxer Codex, one sees the Filipinos wearing ornaments, mostly made of gold. You can go on a field trip to the Met Museum or Ayala Museum to see these gold jewelry as well as reproductions of the Boxer Codex. You can also go to Bulacan to see the jewelry-making industry there.
- Have your students do illustrations of Filipinos today, taking off from the Boxer Codex. Do Filipinos today have distinctive costumes? What are these? You can go into when these costumes are worn, by whom, where and why.



This is a drawing from Andreas Vesalius (1514-64), a teacher of surgery & anatomy.

His work *De Humanis Corporis Fabrica* was revolutionary as it revealed that there were errors in the previous teachings of Greek physician Galan (ca.129-216 AD). According to the British Library, Vesalius was “able to correct 200 previously unquestioned theories.”



- Have your students research on the history of the study of anatomy & the place of drawings such as the one in previous slide in such studies. How different is anatomical studies then and now?
- Would drawings like this be sufficient or would there be need for dissection still? Discuss the pros and cons of each.
- Look at various anatomy books and try to infer whether or not the drawings indicate different ways of seeing the human body. Read *The Body Book* published by GCF Books for the way Filipinos look at the body. You can also read *The Soul Book* for comparison.



Could recipe/cook books be considered also?



Contemporary recipe/cook books use photographs but in the past, these had drawings.

What do the drawings show?

How helpful are the drawings?

Make an illustration for one of your favorite recipes.

You can invite a food stylist to demonstrate how s/he makes food look good for photographs, etc.





- Some books on Filipino food which have drawings are:
- *The Philippine Cookbook* by Virginia Roces de Guzman & Nina Daza Puyat (you should also see the 2nd edition)
- *Galing-Galing Philippine Cuisine* by Nora & Mariles Daza
- *Culinary Culture in the Philippines* edited by Gilda Cordero Fernando
- *The Secret is in the Sauce: Cookbook for Noncooks* by Marianne Gonzalez de Leon
- *Kusina: What's Cooking in the Philippines* and *Kusina II: What's Cooking in the Philippines* edited by Cid Reyes



You can discuss the efforts of government and the private sector to create awareness of nutrition, to address the issue of food supply, etc. You may have your class start a feeding program in cooperation with church groups and other organizations.



- For more information or for inquiries, you may email education@lopez-museum.org