

## Remembering Amado Castro

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At the season opener of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra on September 15, 2017, a prominent lady patron of the arts asked me, “Where is your friend who always comes with you?”

I answered, “That was Prof. Amado Castro. He passed away on June 10”. The lady expressed her condolences.

Music was one of the things outside of economics that Amado and I shared. As a season subscriber to the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, he always had a ticket for me, and I would reciprocate by inviting him to the season concerts of the Manila Symphony Orchestra.

Many years and even decades ago, I had gotten Amado to serve on the board of the Manila Symphony, which my family had supported since its founding in 1926, and we remained on the board until its president, my aunt Mrs. Rosario Legarda de Valdes, passed away in 1969. Thereafter a new leadership took over, and Amado and I both bowed out of the picture.

Amado’s genuine love for classical music was seen when he worked for some years in the ASEAN secretariat in Jakarta. Rightly or wrongly, he considered that city a cultural desert, and was always happy to return to Manila where he could enjoy concerts.

One of his musical opinions was that the traditional three B’s of music—Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms—merited a fourth B: Berlioz. Having performed with the Harvard Glee Club and the Boston Symphony under Berliozian authority Charles Munch, I heartily agreed.

Amado’s musical path at Harvard differed from mine. As just mentioned, I joined the Harvard Glee Club and got to do major works by Amado’s four B’s in music. Amado pursued a more low-key path by joining the Saint Paul’s parish choir and got to know the proper way of doing Gregorian chant.

He knew the late Cardinal Bernard Law, a Harvard student at that time whom he referred to as Bernie Law, and who was probably also a member of the parish choir. The cardinal was later forced to resign for shifting alleged pedophile priests around different parishes, but Amado and I never discussed this.

Although Amado was two years ahead of me in the pre-war Ateneo high school, we only met when he came to Harvard in 1949. I had preceded him by a

year, but since I took two years off to start working in Manila, he got his Ph.D. ahead of me.

I had wanted to do my thesis on Philippine trade during the American period, but found out he had already done so, and I was pushed back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, resulting in my dissertation that over four decades later emerged as the book *After the galleons*, published by the University of Wisconsin Press and co-published locally by the Ateneo de Manila University Press, at whose launching he made some generous remarks.

Down through the years I kept urging him to spruce up his thesis for publication, but he never did. I wonder if the present generation of UP economists can retrieve this thesis and see whether it can be edited for publication. Although I have never read it, I understand it narrates the course of our foreign trade as a case of economic dependence.

Because it was a study in economic dependence, Amado's dissertation found Hirschman index values higher for exports than the levels I found for the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Possibly this is why he found the 19<sup>th</sup> century levels "not worrisome".

Perhaps one other reason is the difference in the underlying economic situation. Hirschman's data are for modern countries with diversified economies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with 40 as the bar for higher concentration. The Philippines in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an agricultural export economy. The bar of 40 for high concentration in such economies should perhaps be set higher.

Early after our return from graduate studies, we both joined the Philippine Jaycees, an organization of young businessmen and professionals below the age of 36. Both of us considered it a valuable learning experience. He from his perch in academic theory, and I from my involvement in monetary policy, came to know the young businessmen who actually made the economy function, something we could not have picked up from books.

He connected active conduct with economic generalization. One of our Jaycee colleagues was Russell Swartley of Meralco. Amado cited his prompt survey after liberation to see what damaged facilities needed replacing and quickly ordered the replacement to restore electric power as soon as possible, an example of timely investment. He contrasted that with the telephone company's policy of relying on profits from current operations, which resulted in slow progress.

In traffic he would fume as a rider, but as an economist recognized the heavy traffic as indication of economic activity.

Amado got a bit of reality exposure when, during the Macapagal Administration, he served on the board of the Development Bank of the Philippines, thus bringing him face to face with real-life economic situations.

Amado was an avid camera enthusiast and an active member of the Camera Club. Although I had taken pictures for my own pursuits, I was never deeply into photography and was not a member of the club.

He helped me in my own interests. At the time, I was researching on Philippine colonial churches and had made several excursions with other Harvardian friends. There came a time when I wanted to revisit the churches of Ilocos, and he flew to Laoag to join me in going down the coast, clicking away as we went along. My efforts resulted in my first article on the subject, "Colonial churches of Ilocos", which appeared in 1960 in *Philippine Studies* and became regarded as a pioneering effort.

One hobby of his that few people know about was biking. We lived on opposite sides of San Juan, he in the older portion and I in the new Ortigas subdivisions. Sometimes, on Sunday mornings, he would appear unannounced on his bicycle.

So Amado was a colleague not only professionally in economics but also in civic, musical, and cultural entities. He will be missed, primarily in the field of economic teaching but also for his quiet but valued contributions in the cultural field. One wishes there were more of his kind.