

# An Analysis of Amado V. Hernandez's Novel "Birds of Prey" Using Sociological and Biographical Perspective

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine various social issues in the novel *Birds of Prey* by Amado V. Hernandez through content analysis. It also aims to produce an analysis from social issues to the elements of characters, venue and rivalry. The use of Sociological and Biographical perspectives has played a major part in highlighting the data in the study. In order to carry out this study, the researcher has tried to address various social issues in the novel. Based on the data gathered and the results, the study showed that social issues represent ten components. Characters, venue and rivalry have played an important role in raising various social issues. Finally, the life of Amado V. Hernandez is intertwined with the life of Mando Plaridel who is the main character in the novel.

*Keywords: Sociological; Biographical, Birds of Prey; Social Issues; Literature*

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## 1. Main Text

### Introduction

In the pandemic brought about by COVID-19, there are many social issues that everyone can hear, watch, and witness. The novels created by our ancestors can awaken the consciousness and minds of every student, which are taught in Filipino subjects as well as in the subject of Social Studies. One of the contemporary writers, Amado V. Hernandez, greatly inspired the researcher to carry out this study. The researcher found that only a few people are still studying the book "Birds of Prey", even in the life of the author. The researcher wanted to share with students and readers the importance of the works of Amado V. Hernandez as well as the various social issues to enlighten each of the minds of every student on social issues and also be part of helping to solve them. Thus, the sociological and biographical perspective on the novel *Birds of Prey* by Amado V. Hernandez was conducted by the researcher to identify various social issues as well as the relationship between Amado V. Hernandez and the main character, Mando Plaridel.

## Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to look at the various social issues raised in Amado V. Hernandez's novel "Birds of Prey" from a sociological and biographical perspective:

1. What social issues are covered in the novel Birds of Prey?
2. How does the author present social issues in the following elements?
  - 2.1 character;
  - 2.2 setting;
  - 2.3 conflict?
3. What events in the author's life can be seen in the novel?

## Related Literature

### Social Issues

According to the book *Kontekstwalisadong Komunikasyon sa Filipino* (2018) by Jessica Marie Dela Peña et al., pp. 87–92, it is said that there are various social issues facing the Philippines.

First, the issue of poverty; second, the issue of education; third, the issue of workers; fourth, the economy; fifth, the issue of health; sixth, the issue of nature; and seventh, the issue of gender. In the above-mentioned issues, they discussed every current issue facing our country that serves as a blow to our community and our development.

In Alvarado E.'s (2019) study "Luha ng Buwaya: Wika at isyung sosyo-politikal ng mga magsasaka" she listed social issues, the ongoing economic, political, cultural, institutional, and other social forces that are in conflict to be resolved. This shows that literature always has a struggle. Moralism, on the other hand, focuses on the power of literature on human behaviour, thinking, and emotions.

### Birds of Prey

Hernandez A. V. created his work "Birds of Prey: Socio-Political Novel" (n.d.) A novel is a type of literature that consists of a long fictional story divided into chapters. This novel has a socio-political theme that depicts the Philippines' political and social situation. It describes a person's real life as a representative of society through practice or storytelling.

From the book by Fernandez and Sandoval, R. A. (2017) "Panitikan: Isang Sanaysay Tungkol Sa Panitikang Pilipino," it is stated that the three dominant spirits in the novel are nationalism, the pursuit of justice, and the power of truth.

Filipino nationalism was tested during the war. Some chose to fight the colonist, while others chose to join the current colonist because it was easier to give up than to fight. Still others chose not to fight and

instead waited for them to arrive in the country, taking advantage of the opportunities to satisfy themselves with luxury and wealth while trampling on their neighbour. The guerrillas served the people willing to lay down their lives for their freedom from the colonist and dreamed that in their endeavour to climb the mountain, the system would change and be surrounded by spiders just waiting for food and no longer suffer alone.

### **Approaches in Literature**

It is mentioned in the work of Espina, L. D., Plasencia, N. R. and Ramos, V. R. (2009) "Ang Literatura ng Iba't Ibang Rehiyon ng Pilipinas," that students develop a deep appreciation of literature when the teacher leading them to "experience" literary works also have thorough knowledge and interest in various literatures. They want students to enjoy reading literature. But we cannot share this interest in literature if we ourselves do not find pleasure in reading. If we want literature to always be on the minds of students, we must also be prepared to recite a line of poetry, if not the entire poem, in front of the class. In other words, we need to show our interest in literature if we want our student to like it. In the context of teaching, the teacher must also have a thorough knowledge of the whole text. Many critics and experts believe that there are many ways to read the text. Many theories can be made from the literature and many interpretations even if only one text is read.

Taneo R.'s (2018) study "Imbentaryo ng Lapit o Dulog at Estrategiya o Pamamaraan," pointed out that of his findings in assessing student learning, there is no specific strategy or methodology on how to implement the effective teaching of the arts of language and literature. However, having a broad understanding of the nature and needs of students along with a broad knowledge and understanding of the techniques, strategies or methods in their teaching will contribute to meaningful and interactive student learning.

### **Biographical Approach**

Cited in their work Limpot, M. Y. et al. (2019) "Panitikang Filipino," that the purpose of this literary theory is to bring out experience or prosperity in the life of the author. Biographical works indicate the parts of the author's life where he or she is at the peak of his happiest, most difficult, and saddest experiences, which should serve as the reader's companion in his or her experience of the world. There are two conditions associated with biographical theory:

- 1.) The only answer to analysis is the work itself, being read and reviewed so that it is not replaced in the life of the poet or writer.
- 2.) The author's flaws and weaknesses in his work should not be decided by anyone reading the work.

In addition, Bernaldes, R. A. (2020) "Sosyedad at Literatura" states that the biographical approach is about the author's life. This approach refers to the biography of the author. In his written work, we can read some events that took place in the real life of the author so that he can further shape the form of his written work. This is also evident in the author's philosophy when he reads his perspective on the things he wants to convey to the readers. Biographers also believe that the writer writes about things he personally experiences and sees around him. As a result, his works are gimmicks or influences of life experiences and events. So, it was recognizable until now.

## Sociological Approach

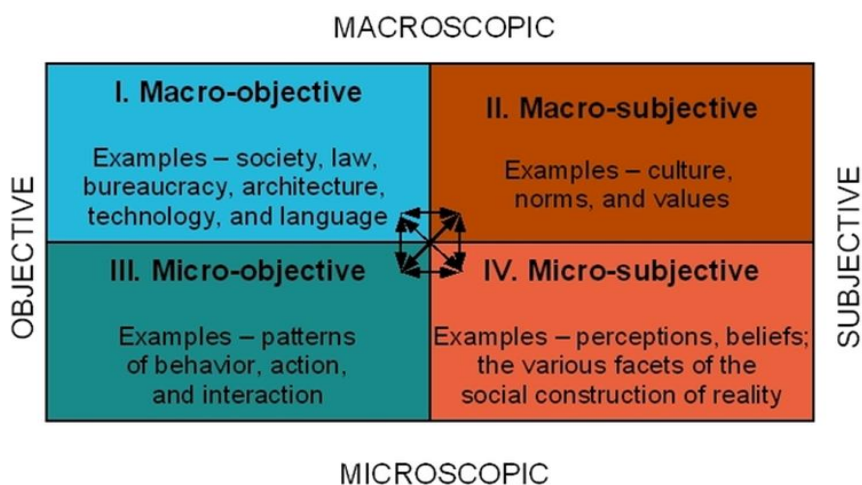
In their work, Hufana, N. L. et al. (2018) note in their research " Wika at Kultura sa Mapayapang Lipunan," the sociological approach reflects the condition and social problems of the society to which the author belongs. Moreover, this approach focuses on the analysis of social-consciousness and emphasizes the relationship of man to his fellow man, the environment, society, and other social aspects.

According to Bernales, R. A. (2020), " Wika, Kultura, Lipunan: Introduksyon sa Sosyolinggwistika," society is the most important factor in the formation of an individual's personality. Society pushes men to do and not do things that can be good or bad for them. Because of the social unrest in the Middle Ages, people began to ask questions. The long period dominated by religious beliefs and controlled by kings is already losing control of society. People in society began to wonder if the order of kings should be obeyed and if the church was really doing the will of God. With the advent of the Enlightenment, there were some changes in society. Changes greatly affect the entire country. The industrial revolution is one of them. Before a sudden change in the industry took place, people stayed in their homes for a long time.

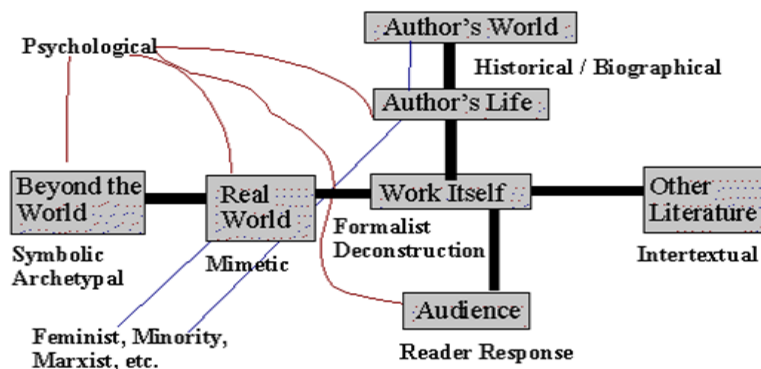
This is the only place they make money, and it's a system they've been used to for a long time. But because of the industrial revolution, everything changed. They became workers in large factories, which led to a change from the old habit of working only at home. As a result of this incident, many social problems continue to worsen. There are areas that have developed along with homelessness for the poor and rising crime. The old society powered by personal interaction has become a society of strangers. These social changes have allowed people to think. Should the problems of society be restored or solved? In this situation, it is important to properly analyse the company. Here, the intellectuals thought that the method used in poor science could be used to fully assess the social condition. Thus, was born sociology.

## Theory Model

The theoretical models shown below served as the basis and guide for the researcher in conducting the study to validate and be certain of the result of such problems.



**Figure 1.1 George Ritzer's Integration Theory of Social Analysis.** In presenting "Panunuring Pampanitikan" (2005), the sociological perspective does not focus on the work or text but on the context itself and on what influence has shaped it. It is amended by the work of Santiago, L.Q. (2007) in "Mga Panitikan ng Pilipinas." The sociological perspective is able to infer the conditions of a society at the time the work was written. Most of the works reviewed using that perspective deal with the social situation and the type of person who was overwhelmed at the time. In interpreting the two works, it can be seen that they are related to each other. It is clearly stated that the sociological perspective is focused on society, on the person living there, on his condition, and on the problems, he faces from the society to which he belongs.



**Figure 2 The Four Critical Variables of Literary Theory and Criticism.** Next is the work of Limpot, M. Y. et al. (2019) "Panitikang Filipino," where the purpose of this literary theory is to bring out experience or prosperity in the life of the author. Biographical works indicate the parts of the author's life where he or she is the happiest, most difficult, saddest and "most" that should serve as the reader's companion in his or her experience of the world. In addition to what Bernales, R. A. (2020) said in "Society and Literature" (Social Literature), the biographical perspective is about the author of literary works. He writes the literary works that we have readable to date. This approach refers to the biography of the author. In his written work, we can read some events that took place in the real life of the author so that he can further shape the form of his written work. This is also evident in the author's philosophy when he reads his perspective on the things he wants to convey to the readers.

### Conceptual Framework

The paradigms that can be observed below contain the overall concept of the research conducted. The purpose of this concept is to explain the flow of research.

Various Social  
Issues in the Novel  
Birds of Prey

Sociological and  
biographical  
perspectives

Content Analysis

An Approach to  
Literature:

Analysis of a novel  
based on:

Character  
Setting  
Conflict

Analysed Statements  
in Amado V.  
Hernandez's Novel  
Birds of Prey based  
on Sociological and  
Biographical  
Perspectives

**Figure 2: Paradigm of the Study.** The second figure above lays out the concept in the study conducted by the researcher. It shows at the top the three boxes that are relevant to carrying out this research. In the first box, you will find the equipment of the researcher that served as the basis of his study. The use of social issues and literary tools became the basis for carrying out the research flow. The second box was the process of his exploration of the data gathered. The method of his study was the content analysis of the entirety of the novel "Birds of Prey," which is related to the problems of his study. And the final box was the overall outcome of his research. The researcher examined various social issues from the sociological and biographical perspective in the novel *Birds of Prey* by Amado V. Hernandez.

## Methodology

This chapter contains research design, research equipment, and data treatment to support this study.

### Research Design

This analysis is a qualitative type of study that uses content analysis. According to Business Dictionary (2011), the research project is a detailed picture of how the research will be conducted. It typically contains how the researcher will collect the data, what and how to use the selected tool, and the methods by which the data will be analysed. Meanwhile, the article "Filipino sa Iba't-ibang Disiplina" (2014) defines content analysis as a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within a given piece of data (i.e., text). Using content analysis, researchers can evaluate the meanings and relationships of particular words, themes, or concepts.

### Material to be Analyzed

The subject of this study is the novel *Birds of Prey*, written by Amado V. Hernandez. The data gathered by the researcher from books, newspapers, various journals, websites, and articles were also compiled to obtain appropriate and sufficient data that served as a basis and guide to answer the questions presented in this study. The review of the novel feature focuses on social issues to support the data required in this study. The important scenes in this novel were also used to validate the data that formed the foundation of the researcher in his conducted study.

### Treatment of Material

Careful analysis of the novel was done through the use of content analysis or content analysis. The content analysis method has enabled the researcher to include important textual information that will be in response to making the content meaningful in the analysed novel. The technique was carried out to describe, explain, and interpret the essential conditions of the story that are directly stated in the novel. whereas the purpose of content analysis is to be interpreted from the content of the text, hence following the paradigm of learning. It also uses the analysis of various social issues using sociological and biographical perspectives that are relevant to the reality of society. The text was analysed inductively to reflect the importance of society and the importance of those involved in society. To produce a comprehensive analysis of the selected novel, the researcher used a sociological and biographical perspective to frame the intention of the study to enrich students' knowledge regarding various social issues and their socio-awareness. political in the novel *Birds of Prey*. The researcher also used the three elements: the character, the setting, and the conflict to float the various social issues in each element. The analysis also focuses on the essence of the work itself by examining the lives of the author and the main character in the novel. Important stages in the novel are also mentioned

and analysed to justify the essence of the work.

## **Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter presents a summary and conclusions based on the sociological and biographical analysis of the novel *Birds of Prey* by Amado V. Hernandez.

### **Summary**

This study aimed to examine, using a biographical and sociological perspective, the novel *Birds of Prey* by Amado V. Hernandez. The researcher made sure to address various questions in his study. First, what social issues are covered in the novel *Birds of Prey*? Second, how does the author present social issues in the following elements: character, setting, and conflict? Lastly, what events in the author's life can be seen in the novel? In order to gather the data in the study, the researcher used a thematic approach to reveal different data throughout the novel. The use of biographical and sociological perspectives has greatly helped to properly evaluate the novel. Finally, the use of various social issues, character, setting and conflicts was also a guide to present various data in the study.

### **Findings**

From the problems and questions posed in the research, the following are the outcomes of the study:

#### **I. Various Social Issues in the Novel *Birds of Prey***

After carefully and thoroughly reading the novel, the researcher realized that various social issues have greatly affected the life of Mando Plaridel, who is the main character in the novel, along with the various characters in it. The researcher gathered ten social issues from the novel. First is the issue of poverty; second is the issue of education; third is the issue of gender; fourth is the issue of health; fifth is the issue of politics; sixth is the issue of peace; seventh is the issue of the economy; eighth is the issue of labor and peasantry; ninth is a human rights issue; and finally, the issue of colonialism.

#### **II. Author's Presentation of Social Issues based on the Elements of Character, Setting and Conflict**

##### **2.1 Character**

This study presents various social issues in the lives of the characters in the novel. From Mando Plaridel, Magat, and Andres, who are the publishers of the *Kampilan* newspaper. The author shares the different trajectories of publicists despite their fair coverage. They did not stem the tide of evil, but they fought for truth and justice, especially in the lives of the peasants. The lives of Puri, Pastor, Danoy, Mang Tumas, and Rubio followed, who became the voices of the farmers at Hacienda Montero. They fought for their rights and freedoms in their jobs as farmers. They did not budge from the threats, murder and capture of them by Don Segundo Montero in the person of Captain Pugot, who was the trustee of the Hacienda. Third, the antagonists of the novel. They are Don Segundo Montero, Donya Julia Montero, Dolly Montero, Senator Botin, General Bayoneta, Bishop Dimas, Judge Pilato, Governor Doblado, Son Tua, and Pong Tua-son. They are the so-called birds of prey who are greedy for wealth, greedy for power, usurpers of rights, and do not pay their workers properly. They both do everything to destroy society and become blind to the truth. Finally, Senator Tata Matyas, Dr. Sabio, and Tata Matyas. It is clear that Mando has guided him to fulfill his duties as a

publicist and as a Filipino. The characters in the novel go through different problems and different stories, but they are connected for the same reason. Those are the social issues that they cannot escape.

## 2.2 Setting

The meetings also served as the face of social issues, especially in the life of Mando Plaridel. All the meetings took place to fully understand the different situations or situations relating to the social issues faced by the staff. The meeting places in the novel are Hacienda Montero, Don Segundo Montero's mansion, various countries visited by Mando, the Sierra Madre mountains, Tata Matyas' home, Baguio City, Pastor and Puri's home, and Kampilan. Manila, Atimonan, Quezon, and other places related to Mando Plaridel.

## 2.3 Conflict

The conflict serves as a torch to float social issues. Looking at the types of human-against-society and human-against-human conflict has greatly brought awareness to the researcher's study. The use of character, setting, and conflict was effective to raise various social issues throughout the study.

## III. Events in the Author's Life as Seen in the Novel

In the researcher's analysis, most parts of the life of the main character, Mando Plaridel, have connections to the life of the author, Amado V. Hernandez. From its name being inverted only to the real name of the author, to his face with a mirror, to his lifestyle, to his being a publicist, to his pro-work, to his departure towards various countries, and his imprisonment for accusing him of those in government. All of this has to do with the life of Amado V. Hernandez. The researcher believes that the author used the life of Mando Plaridel to narrate what his life was like during the war until the day of his independence.

## Conclusion

The outcome of the study from the presented problem of this research is as follows:

1. There are various social issues rooted in birds of prey that show the collapse of society.
2. The elements of character, setting and conflict bring to light various social issues in the lives of the characters in the work.
3. The life of Mando Plaridel reflects the real life of Amado V. Hernandez.

## Recommendations

Based on the outcome and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested by the researcher:

1. Students are encouraged to read a variety of novels and other literary works. It is very helpful to understand the state of society. It will also help to know the importance of Filipino literature. On the other hand, the patronage of various literature created by our veteran writers can promote our own language and literature.



2. It is recommended that teachers use various literary works in Filipino to introduce students to the excellence of our writers and their amazing works. It also shows appreciation and care for the work for future generations. We will serve as a bridge for our students to once again enjoy the beauty and value of our literary works.
  
3. Subsequent researchers are instructed to continue the study of the novel *Birds of Prey* by Amado V. Hernandez in order to further deepen, highlight, and flog the various social issues that are explored throughout the work.

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