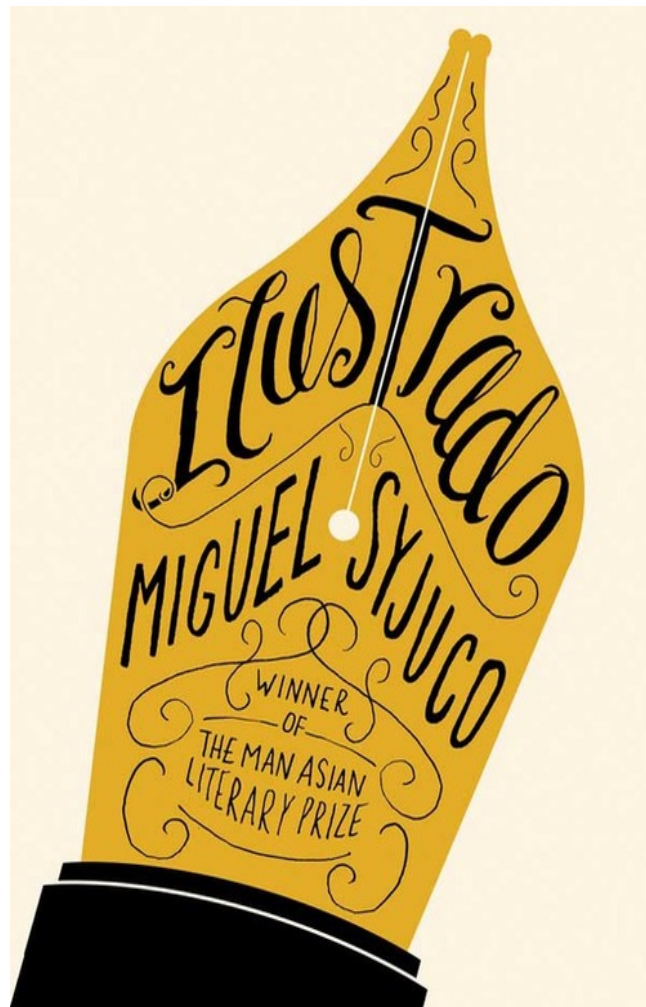


Reader's Roadmap

Helping you navigate the world of books



F S982i

Book of the Month
March 2011



Reader's Roadmaps enable readers to pursue threads of interest inspired by a book they've just read.

Ilustrado F S982i

Ilustrado is the ambitious and exceptionally complicated debut novel by Miguel Syjuco (pronounced *see-hoo-coh*). Garnering world-wide attention, this book has won the Palanca Grand Prize for the Novel Category in 2008 – the Philippines' highest literary honour, as well as the prestigious Man Asian Literary Prize later that year when it was still in manuscript form. More recently, Syjuco was short-listed among five finalists by Amazon.ca for its First Novel Award, a prize which recognizes the outstanding achievement of a Canadian first-time novelist.

An extraordinary reception for a first-time novel, Syjuco sets out to describe Philippine culture that is so much more than the pervasive misconceptions of domestic workers and Imelda Marcos. With the makings of a great mystery, this book begins with a murder – the body of Crispin Salvador, an eminent, albeit controversial writer of Philippine literature is pulled out of the Hudson River. A manuscript of the murdered author is also missing – a work that exposed the crimes and corruption of many Filipino ruling families. This event prompts his student and protégé, Miguel Syjuco (yes, the protagonist is the author's namesake) to investigate whether or not this was a suicide, as reported by the police and the press.

Suspecting that Crispin's death is linked to the missing manuscript, Syjuco (the protagonist), heads back to the Philippines to try and solve this. On this journey, not only does he uncover much about his mentor, he learns new things about himself – of his own literary ambitions, personal failures, and of what it means to be a writer who has left the country. Part mystery thriller, part historical fiction part political novel, *Ilustrado* spans the last 150 years of Philippine culture, with lush descriptions of it's people, historical and popular culture, and local linguistic idiosyncrasies.

With the use of a compositional device called literary bricolage, Syjuco (the protagonist) pieces together Crispin's life and work through book excerpts, memoirs, articles, blogs, interviews, essays and poetry. In an interview, Syjuco (the author) explained that the narrative structure of *Ilustrado* is based on Philippine textiles, which, on the surface appears to be a patchwork, but on closer inspection, it is in fact intricate designs woven seamlessly with clear threads of continuity.

Not only is the book meant to be a celebration of all things Filipino, it is intellectually stimulating. Incorporating these shared parallels such as having the same name and numerous life experiences between Syjuco author and Syjuco protagonist, this book blurs the line between fiction and non-fiction, and leaves it up to the reader to sort out which is which.

Miguel Syjuco

Currently living in Montreal, Miguel Syjuco earned a master's degree from Columbia University and is completing his PhD at the University Of Adelaide, Australia. Born in 1976 into a political family in Manila, Syjuco left the Philippines to become a writer.



Fiction in the Philippines

- The solemn lantern maker / by Merlinda C Bobis: F O77b
- Don Vicente: two novels / by F. Sionil José: FJ836do
- Always hiding / by Sophia G. Romero: F R7635a

Mystery fiction in the Philippines

- Manila Bay / by William Marshall: M M369m
- Philippine fever / Bruce R. Cook: M C7717p

Ruling Families and Corruption in Fiction

- Assassins' creed: Renaissance / by Oliver Bowden: F B7846a
- Uncivil Seasons / by Michael Malone: M M2575u

Murder & Manuscripts

- Retribution: A Lew Fonesca novel / by Stuart Kaminsky: M K15re
- Asta's book / by Barbara Vine: M V782a

Writers in turmoil

- Blinding light / by Paul Theroux: F T412b
- Obsessions / by Marshall Cook: M C7718o
- The angel's game / by Carlos Ruiz Zafón: F R934a

Author coming soon!

BIBLIOTHÈQUE
PUBLIQUE
ELEANOR LONDON
CÔTE SAINT-LUC
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

W. WRITERS
**out
loud**

come hear author

Miguel Syjuco

photo: Marcos Townsend

Ilustrado
MIGUEL SYJUCO
WINNER
OF
THE MAN ASIAN
LITERARY PRIZE

Thursday, April 7 at 7 pm

Tickets: \$3 (in advance)
\$5 (day of event)

Ce programme se déroule en anglais.

Canada Council
for the Arts
Conseil des Arts
du Canada

5851 Cavendish Blvd., Côte Saint-Luc (QC)
514-485-6900 elcslpl.org

City of
Côte Saint-Luc



5851 Cavendish Blvd. Côte Saint-Luc, Québec
phone: 514-485-6900
email: reference@cotesaintluc.org