

ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations are groups of writers who come together for a variety of purposes. Writers may organize themselves because of a common world view, political ideology, or intellectual temperament. Others form groups for publication and workshop projects. Writers have also been known to get together for the sake of literary fellowship and sharing of artistic output, with some ritualistic elements involved. Groups outside of Manila have strengthened their ranks so that they may continue to assert regional writing and identity, in the process contributing to the development of a multiethnic body of national literature.

A listing of the history of writers' groups is essential for two reasons. One, it gives a picture of how organized writers have influenced literary trends and movements. Second, it shows how writers may have influenced one another's works.

The origins of literary organizing can be traced to the reform movement, 1882-1896. The prime movers of the reform movement based in Spain chose to publish critical, often satirical, essays about the Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines. These writers, among them Jose Rizal and Marcelo H. del Pilar, used the newspaper *La Solidaridad* as the venue for their campaign for reforms. While it is debatable that these propagandists organized themselves formally as a "literary group," one cannot deny that these writers were bound by a common desire to work for a political cause through their writings.

The oldest literary society in the country could be the Liceo-Artistico Literario, organized in 1879. Established to promote Spanish letters in the Philippines and to establish "professional chairs of literature, drama, music and painting," the Liceo-Artistico-Literario published a literary magazine and sponsored literary contests in prose and poetry, as well as painting and sculpture

Emiliano Olano became the president of this organization, which lasted for only three years but succeeded in launching two main projects. One of these projects was the publication of a weekly (later, fortnightly) magazine *Revista del Liceo Artistico-Literario* (Review of the Artist-Literary Lyceum), 1879. It came out with six issues. The editor-in-chief, Francisco de Marcaida, a Filipino, had a staff of 21 Spaniards and three Filipinos, many of them award-winning prose writers and poets.

The other project was a literary contest. Two contests were held by the Liceo: one in 1879 and another in 1880, to commemorate the 264th death anniversary of Miguel de Cervantes. Jose Rizal's entries won in both contests: "A la juventud filipina" (To the Filipino Youth) in 1879, and *El consejo de los dioses* (The Council of the Gods) in 1880.

Other groups known for their literary *tertulias* (evening parties) came into

existence. The word tertulia refers to a gathering of artists, lovers of art and culture, and friends who discuss a variety of topics. These tertulias became the core activity of the literary groups which were active during the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century.

In 1892, Macario Adriatico led and organized a group of university students with literary inclinations. The Academia de la lengua y literatura, which was founded at Vicente Ilustre's residence had about 50 members, among them Fernando Ma. Guerrero, Gregorio Aguilera, Luis Luna, and Cecilio Apostol.

The tertulias sponsored by the Academia de la lengua y literatura attracted the best writers of the period. By 1894, the organization was holding its gatherings at Epifanio de los Santos' residence in Intramuros. New members were Rafael Palma, Clemente Jose Zulueta, and Manuel Guerrero. Others who were reported to have joined the literary tertulias of the Academia were Emilio Jacinto and Juan Sumulong.

Another literary club of the period was El Jardin de Epicuro, founded by Fernando Ma. Guerrero. The members of this group were modernist writers like Sixto Roces, Feliciano Basa, Jose R. Teotico, Flavio Cano Zaragoza, Alejo Valdez Pica, Jose Gavira Hernandez, and Jesus Balmori. This group discussed, among other things, the works of Ruben Dario, a Spanish writer who greatly influenced their works.

The Liceo, the Academia, El Jardin, and other groups were significant because of the tertulias they sponsored. These gatherings also attracted the participation of Tagalog writers such as Iñigo Ed. Regalado. Moreover, the gatherings provided venues for the study of works of other writers, poetry readings, literary discussions, and debates on the political issues of the period.

Tagalog writers started to organize during the first decade of American colonial rule, with the founding of Aklatang Bayan in 1910 in Tondo, Manila. Elected as president and secretary of the group were Rosauro Almario and Gerardo Chanco, respectively.

The Aklatang Bayan's objectives, as stated in Filipino in the newspaper ***Renacimiento Filipino***, here translated into English were: "to fight vices, evil conduct and beliefs, corrupt politics, [and to] be critical of religion and everyday life . . ." (Almario 1984:54).

Among the activities sponsored by the Aklatang Bayan were weekly meetings that featured poetic orations and songs. The group also sponsored contests and propagated the national language. The Aklatang Bayan celebrated Balagtas Day, 2 April, by performing literary jousts to the delight of the public. They did this in Baliuag, 1915, in Meycauayan, 1916, and in Bigaa (now Balagtas), 1917.

Aklatang Bayan drew its strength from the popularity of its members, many of whom were the leading writers of the period whose activities were featured in the dailies. Active in the group were Lope K. Santos, Carlos Ronquillo, Faustino Aguilar, Benigno Ramos, Patricio Mariano, Pedro Gatmaitan, Valeriano Hernandez Peña, Severino Reyes, Nemesio Caravana, Amado V. Hernandez, Leonardo Dianzon, and Aniceto Silvestre. Its two other presidents were Precioso Palma, 1915, and Julian Cruz Balmaseda, 1920, who led the group until his death in 1947.

It is said that discontent with the “academic taste” of Aklatang Bayan became the basis for the founding of Ilaw at Panitik (Manuud ed. 1967:386). Organized during the early 20th century, the group was headed for a long time by Jose Esperanza Cruz. It was one of the biggest and most popular of the literary societies, which included among its members the likes of Deogracias A. Rosario, considered a pioneer in the Tagalog short story; the much acclaimed poet Jose Corazon de Jesus; Teodoro Gener; poet, novelist, journalist and labor leader Amado V. Hernandez; and poet-playwright Cirio H. Panganiban. Jose Esperanza Cruz, editor of the *Lwayway* for more than 20 years, became the first president of Ilaw at Panitik.

In August 1915, Cirio H. Panganiban explained that “Ilaw” (light) referred to the belief and confidence of the writer, whereas “Panitik” (pen) referred to a literature committed to the independence of the country. Other literary organizations active during the first decade were Samahang Mananagalog, Kapisanang Sisne, Dunong Ginto, Florante at Laura, Aklatang Barusaga, all of which were in Tondo, and Aklatang Balagtas in Sampaloc.

The young writers of Tagalog literature organized themselves into the Kapisanang Panitikan as a reaction to the well-entrenched organizations Aklatang Bayan and Ilaw at Panitik. Founded in 1935 at the residence of Alejandro Abadilla in Santa Cruz, Manila, Panitikan was a reaction to the dominant group of older writers being published in major outlets like *Lwayway*.

In a statement, the members of the Kapisanang Panitikan described their group as “an organization of *sakdalista* and artistocrats among Tagalog writers: sakdalista because it shuns the distorted policy and the degenerate art of those in power; and aristocrat because it is not afraid to be alienated from the majority if it is for the good and glory of Tagalog literature” (Almario 1984:134).

This society, led by Abadilla, founding vice president, and Clodualdo del Mundo, founding president, “was determined to be ‘modern,’ in the sense that it was to diverge from the traditional along lines being pursued by the writers of Philippine English literature” (Lumbera and Lumbera 1982:112). Among the members of Panitikan were Teodoro Agoncillo, Brigido Batungbakal, Salvador Barros, Epifanio Gar. Matute, Teo S. Buhain (founding secretary), Fernando Monleon, Genoveva Edroza-Matute, Pablo Glorioso, Jesus Arceo, Cresencio Cruz Torres, Manuel Car. Santiago, Gonzalo K. Flores, Manuel Principe Bautista, and Ruben Vega.

The members of Panitikan held a book-burning rally at Plaza Moriones in Tondo in 1940. Much of the prose and poetry they burned belonged to the older writers. The motive for the act was supposedly to destroy previous works that did not merit being passed on to posterity (Manuud ed. 1967:387) At any rate, the book burning was a symbolic event which showed the rift between the older writers and the members of Panitikan.

Panitikan managed to put out a magazine also named *Panitikan*, in 1938. The organization endured for decades and lasted until the 1970s.

In the late 1920s, the young poets of the University of the Philippines (UP) were described by a professor as the “singing birds.” Their discussions centered on elevating “to the highest possible perfection the English language” (Ordoñez 1986). However, the UP Writers’ Club definitely believed at that time that “Art shall not be a means to an end but an end in itself.” The Club’s primary purpose was to publish the works of its members in *The Literary Apprentice*.

Among the founders of the club were the following: Casiano Calalang, Augusto Catanjal, Loreto Paras-Sulit, Arturo Rotor, Felicidad Dani-Martin, Eugenio P. Santos, Vicente del Fierro, Francisco Tonogbanua, Jose M. Hernandez, Paz Latorena, Gabriel Tuazon, and Jose Garcia Villa.

The constitution of the UP Writers’ Club outlines the following objectives: foster unity among its members; encourage and cultivate responsible and relevant writings in the University and society; provide a link between established and developing writers in the University; and promote literary exchange between the club and literary groups/programs outside the University and the country.

Among the most prominent members of the UP Writers’ Club before the war were the following: Jose Lansang Sr., Angela Manalang-Gloria, Federico Mangahas, Amador T. Daguio, Manuel Arguilla, Maria Kalaw-Katigbak, Juan Cabrerros Laya, Maria Luna-Lopez, Sinai Hamada, Bienvenido Santos, Lydia Villanueva-Arguilla, Nelly Xerez-Burgos, Trinidad Tarrosa-Subido, Teofilo D. Agcaoili, Francisco Arcellana, Armando Malay, Leopoldo Yabes, Estrella Alfon, Manuel Viray, and Dominador Ilio.

Through the decades, the UP Writers’ Club counted among its members not only those who wrote professionally but also those who excelled in other fields. Among them are Gemino Abad, Napoleon Abueva, Mila Aguilar, Virgilio Almarino, Pacifico Aprieto, Lorena Barros, Pura Santillan-Castrence, Benjamin Cervantes, Onofre Corpuz, Karina Constantino David, Ricaredo Demetillo, Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Felix Fojas, Ibrahim Jubaira, Paula Carolina Malay, Resil Mojares, Virginia Moreno, Hernando Ocampo, Ninotchka Rosca, Epifanio San Juan Jr., Edilberto Tiempo, Edith Tiempo, Kerima Polotan-Tuvera, and Alfred Yuson.

The Literary Apprentice, which started in the year the club was founded, also became its most enduring project. In the preface to its Silver Jubilee Edition, 1932, Manuel Arguilla wrote: “Self-appointed critics have increasingly of late made the *Literary Apprentice* responsible for topnotchers in selections of best stories, poems, etc. This is all very bad. We have become conscious of greatness. From now on nothing will surprise us.”

It is also this same anthology which Sinai Hamada, president in 1937, noted as “the only excuse for the club’s existence.” All these praises for the *Literary Apprentice* must have been well deserved because as early as 1938, the club began receiving requests for reprinting *Apprentice* material from the *Philippine Magazine*, *Philippine Prose and Poetry*, and other literary publications.

In the same year that Kapisanang Panitikan was founded, 1935, a group of Filipino writers in English also got together to become the Veronicans. The Veronicans were considered a radical group, whose members produced works banned from popular magazines. They also called themselves Barbarians. The coterie published a small magazine called *Expression*. Undaunted by having to publish their works in mimeographed form, they issued the literary magazine *Story Manuscripts*, which specialized in stories unacceptable to the more conservative literary taste.

Among the members of the Veronicans were Francisco Arcellana, Lydia Villanueva-Argullia, Manuel Arguilla, Ernesto Basa, Angel de Jesus, Oscar de Zuñiga, Lazaro Espinosa, Salvador Faustino, Lina Flor, Antonio S. Gabila, N. V. M. Gonzalez, Armando J. Malay, Hernando Ocampo, Pacita Pestaño, and Manuel Viray.

Probably the first women’s literary group was the Bachelorettes. They associated with the Veronicans in teas and literary gatherings (Ordoñez 1986:2). Teresa Arzaga, Luisa Barrera, Nelly Xerez-Burgos, Corazon Juliano, Trinidad L. Tarrosa-Subido, Sally Barrera, Olivia Calumpang, and Carmen Perez were the eight original Bachelorettes.

In the 1930s and early 1940s, some of the bilingual writers were members of both Panitikan and Veronicans. It was their involvement in the literary movement towards modernism that encouraged these writers to band together. Both the Veronicans and Panitikan members “saw themselves as literary rebels and *avant-garde* artists” (Lumbera and Lumbera 1982:112).

In 1939 the Philippine Writers’ League was formed. Considered to be the first national writers’ group with an orientation different from the “aesthetic” one of the UP Writers’ Club, the Philippine Writers’ League believed that literature must have “social content.” The League’s officers included the following: Federico Mangahas, president; Salvador P. Lopez, vice-president; Jose A. Lansang, vice-president; I.P. Caballero, vice-president; and R. R. Roces Jr., treasurer. At around

this time, an “alternative critical orientation” was offered by Salvador P. Lopez in his essays on letters, which would later be part of *Literature and Society*. Lopez pointed out the “vacuousness” of Villa’s aestheticism. Lopez’s ideas were followed by the Philippine Writer’s League and called for social consciousness (Lumbera and Lumbera 1982: 116). A debate followed between Lopez and Alfred Elfren Litiatco. Arturo B. Rotor took Lopez’s side on this issue.

The Philippine Writers’ League sponsored the Commonwealth Awards to promote socially conscious literature. In 1940, it gave the top prizes to *His Native Soil* by Juan C. Laya for the novel; *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife* by Manuel Arguilla for short story; and *Like the Molave and Other Poems* by Rafael Zulueta da Costa for poetry.

The Kalipunan ng mga Manunulat sa Wikang Pilipino or KAWIKA was organized immediately after the Japanese-sponsored republic was proclaimed. At around this time, Tagalog was proclaimed as a national language, a significant development in literature. The members of KAWIKA attended classes conducted by Lope K. Santos, who was then head of the Institute of National Language. Among those who enrolled were Francisco Arcellana, Emilio Aguilar Cruz, Amadeo Dacanay, Lina Flor-Trinidad, N.V.M. Gonzalez, Paz Latorena, Juan C. Laya, Salvador Lopez, Maria Luna Lopez, Hernando Ocampo, and Lydia Villanueva Arguilla.

Little else is known about KAWIKA except that some members who were at that time primarily writing in English shifted to Filipino. N.V.M. Gonzalez won an award for a short story published in the *Liwayway* magazine. H.R. Ocampo, who would later on be known as a painter, also produced fiction and poetry in Tagalog.

No other writers’ organization was known to be active during the Japanese Occupation. Very few literary pieces were published in the *Sunday Magazine*, *Philippine Review*, *Pillars*, published by the Philippine Cultural Institute, *Bagong Araw*, *Filipina*, and *Liwayway*.

However, the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (HUKBALAHAP)—the main anti-Japanese resistance group in Central Luzon—had a Cultural Bureau which produced plays. Revolutionary songs and poetry were also produced by the guerillas. Anonymous writers produced propaganda literature, but they did not organize themselves into literary groups separate from the guerilla groups they were involved with.

After the war, the Philippine literary scene suffered from a lack of literary outlets. Teodoro Agoncillo’s *Malaya*, a magazine that used to be a regular literary outlet, was no longer existing in the 1950s. Moreover, the commercial magazines did not seem to encourage poetry or other writings deemed not popular with the public.

It was in this context that the postwar writers produced their works. Manuel Viray, still reacting to the politics of the Philippine Writers’ League, organized the

Filipino Writers' Guild. The Guild had the following objectives: advancement of the economic interests of the writer, publication of the books of its members, and cooperation with workers in allied trades and with the cause of unionism in the country. Viray thought that the Guild should adopt simply the "spectatorial attitude" and "should be careful of writing which makes of doctrine the motive and end of writing" (Ordoñez 1986:3).

Two other writers' groups were active in the 1950s. Writers in English banded together in 1951 and called themselves The Ravens. Among its original members were Pacifico Aprieto, Hilario Francia, S.V. Epistola, Virginia Moreno, Elmer Ordoñez, Maru Santaromana, Raul R. Ingles, Alejandro Hufana, Bernardo de Leon, Andres Cristobal Cruz, and Armando Bonifacio. They were later joined by Adrian Cristobal, Morli Dharam, Nick Nicolas, Romy Chua, Danny Villanueva, and E.P. Patanne.

The Ravens started out as an offshoot of the UP Writers' Club, to which many of them belonged. Most of them at that time were writing for either the *Philippine Collegian*, the official newspaper of the UP, or the *Philippinensian*, the UP yearbook.

The name "Ravens" has been attributed to a popular poem by Edgar Allan Poe. The Ravens, however, claim no particular reason for using the name except that they liked the sound of it. The Ravens had for its mentor N.V. M. Gonzalez, who conducted informal workshops in his residence as well as in that of member Virginia Moreno at Juan Luna, Tondo. Poetry readings were also part of the activities of the group. The Ravens were influential in the 1950s because they occupied key positions in publications, such as *The Literary Apprentice*, the *Philippine Collegian*, and the *Diliman Review*. The Ravens continued to be active in the 1980s and the 1990s. In November 1975, they sponsored an International Poetry Festival, which was well attended by writers. The group has published two anthologies of their works, *Ravens* and *Sinaglahi*.

At least two members have become leading figures in the largest and most influential writers' groups in the country. Adrian Cristobal was chairperson of the Writers' Union of the Philippines in the 1970s and 1980s. Elmer Ordoñez was elected founding chairperson of the Pambansang Unyon ng mga Manunulat sa Pilipinas (PANULAT) in 1987.

The Tagalog writers also organized themselves in the 1950s. The first to be formed was the Kapisanang Aklat, Diwa at Panitik (KADIPAN). Described as aggressive, idealistic and yet conscious of the realities of Philippine society, the young writers came together from various colleges and universities in Manila 22 October 1950 at the Manuel L. Quezon Educational Institution (later University) in Quiapo, Manila. The organization's objectives were: to promote the Pilipino language; to generate a vigorous Philippine literature; and to expand space allotted for the national language in campus papers. Because of its commitment to the

development of the national language, the group had the support of the Filipino departments of member schools as well as the Institute of National Language (Almario 1984:198).

Among its first members were Ponciano Pineda (who later became the Director of the Institute of National Language), Tomas C. Ongoco, Hilario Coronel, Pablo Bautista, Elpidio Kapulong, Benjamin Condino, C.C. Marquez Jr., Bienvenido Ramos, and Pedro Ricarte. They were joined later by Virgilio Almario, Efren Abueg, Domingo Landicho, Rogelio Mangahas, and Lamberto Antonio. These leading literary figures as well as other members from MLQU, the University of Santo Tomas, Philippine Normal College, Far Eastern University, Philippine College of Commerce, and the UP became very active in the projects of KADIPAN in the 1960s.

KADIPAN had two main projects. One was an annual literary contest, which lasted from 1956 to 1968. Winners were chosen from the poems, essays, or stories published in the school papers. Another valuable output of the group was the anthology *Mga Piling Akda ng Kadipan* (Selected works of KADIPAN), 1965, in Manila.

The bagay poets were highly influenced by contemporary trends in European and American philosophy and literature. The group derived ideas from the Imagists, a school of poetry formed in the first decade of this century. The word *bagay* literally means “thing” or “object,” with the implication that the poetry of the group is focused on situational imagery. Thus, the Bagay poems were striking in their avoidance of sentimental and traditional “poetic” subject matter. Instead, the bagay poets used ordinary experience, e.g., traffic, hanging around the cafeteria, taking snacks, returning home from the moviehouse, apartment living, and the like. If situations potentially charged with feeling or emotion were the subject of a piece (such as a wake, the experience of aging, or a homecoming), these pieces were prevented from becoming maudlin through the use of concrete details, sharp sensual images, and precise, informal language.

In an unpublished statement originally in Filipino, the bagay poets wrote: “Poetry about ‘things’ isn’t simply about things. It doesn’t avoid things. The mind opens to describe. The poet looks with a searching eye. In other words, the poet adjusts to things. This oneness with things gives poems about things five markers” (Almario 1984:204). These five markers are: a new meaning to things; a new, different, realistic and concrete structure; short but faithful descriptions; the use of Filipino; and talking to a particular person, not to humanity or the world in general.

A new level of poetic discourse followed the Manlilikha and bagay period. The writers of the late 1960s and the early 1970s became more politically involved not only in literary organizing but also in mass rallies, demonstrations, and marches, which characterized the nationalist movement for social change known as the First

Quarter Storm. Thus did poetry take on a radical voice. In 1971, these nationalist writers organized themselves into the Panulat Para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan or PAKSA. This included some of the members of the Manlilikha and bagay group as well as new writers based in various colleges and universities.

The nationalist and progressive writers began organizing PAKSA in July 1970. A group met informally on 26 September 1970 at the Philippine College of Commerce (now Polytechnic University of the Philippines). In that meeting, they agreed to form an organization in order to safeguard writers' rights against exploitative publishers and editors. They also passed a resolution to this effect and agreed on the new organization's name.

The first official meeting was held on 23 March 1971 at the Philippine College of Commerce, attended by 16 writers, two of whom had doctoral degrees, while eight had won national literary awards. Elected officers of the Committee for the launching of PAKSA were Domingo Landicho as chairperson, Rogelio Sicat as secretary general, and Bienvenido Lumbera, Rogelio Ordoñez, and Virgilio Almario as spokespersons.

The first activity was a demonstration on 2 April 1971, Balagtas Day, at Plaza Moriones, site of the book-burning activity of Panitikan in 1940. The demonstration carried the theme "Panulat Para sa Pambansang Rebolusyong Pangkultura" (Writing for the National Cultural Revolution). Marching from Plaza Moriones to the National Library, PAKSA members were joined by members of the Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth) or KM; Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (Democratic Association of the Youth) or SDK; Samahang Molabe (Molave Association); and Tanghalang Kamanyang and Tanghalang Bayan, the last two being activist theater groups.

That same afternoon, several writers were being honored and given plaques inside the National Library. Those who were members of PAKSA went down to meet the marchers and added their plaques to the pyre of books. This symbolized the writers' rejection of reactionary literature. The poet Rio Alma (pseud. of Virgilio Almario) would declare that from that day onwards, the writer had to write "*nang may subyang na araro sa dibdib/may langis ng makina sa noo,/ at may pulbura ng armalayt sa kamao*" (with a plow's wound in the heart,/grease on the brow,/and armalite powder in the fist) (Almario 1984:267).

PAKSA held a national workshop for writers on 24-25 July and 1 August 1971. An official congress was held on 18-19 December 1971. Bienvenido Lumbera was elected chairperson. The PAKSA manifesto, in Filipino, proclaimed the group's philosophy: "Literature is a part of culture, and writers are the sentinels of society. They can no longer avoid the responsibility of creating a literature that represents, commits itself to, and expresses the aspirations of the oppressed people; a literature that seeks to dissect and expose a decaying society; a mass literature that shall create and build an indestructible revolutionary force that shall

annihilate oppressive American imperialism—for national democracy” (Almario 1984:268).

The organization’s acronym meant “theme,” but fully spelled out, it was a clear indication of an attitude and agenda consonant with the revolutionary spirit of the times. Working around the basic theme of protracted struggle in the field of culture, it sought to create a literature that was purposive and oriented towards praxis, seeking to “expose and oppose” the evils of Philippine society, substantiating its social analysis and calls to action with street activism as well as cultural work among younger writers in schools and factories.

PAKSA’s existence, however, was short-lived. It was branded by the Marcos intelligence apparatus as a front of the Communist Party of the Philippines. With the declaration of Martial Law, many of its members either went underground or shifted to other forms of political work, thus preventing it from developing into a full-blown national organization of writers with an open national democratic orientation in literary production and other forms of cultural work.

On 21 September 1972, Martial Law was declared, heightening the contradiction between the establishment and colonial culture, on one hand, and the Filipino, mass, democratic culture, on the other (Tiongson 1984:5). Undaunted by the atmosphere of repression, literary organizing resumed.

The concept of forming a “union” implying that, like workers, writers needed to organize to fight for their rights was brought to focus by the establishment in 1975 of the Writers’ Union of the Philippines (WUP). It later became known as the Unyon ng mga Manunulat sa Pilipinas (UMPIL). It was the largest group of writers in the country in the 1970s, and continues to be a viable organization with a huge roster of members and institutional support.

Adrian Cristobal became the first president of WUP or UMPIL, while for many years Virgilio Almario was acknowledged as the prime mover behind the organization. Among its most active members during the early 1980s were T.D. Agcaoili, Lamberto Antonio, Teo Antonio, Arnold Azurin, Mike Bigornia, Andres Cristobal Cruz, Jose Y. Dalisay Jr., Ligaya David Perez, Conrado de Quiros, Ruby Gamboa-Alcantara, Alejandro Hufana, J. Eddie Infante, Marne Kilates, Edgardo Maranan, Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, Wilfrido Nollado, Ponciano Pineda, Godofredo Roperos, Alfredo Navarro Salanga, Luis V. Teodoro, Edilberto Tiempo, Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas, Rene O. Villanueva, and many others.

The organization has three main projects: the Balagtas Awards, given to writers with outstanding contributions to Philippine literature; its annual workshops on the teaching of literature; and its literary journal, *Mithi*. UMPIL has also held poetry readings in various universities, among them De La Salle University, the University of Santo Tomas, Centro Escolar University, and the University of the Philippines.

In 1986, several officers and members of UMPIL resigned or became inactive in the organization because of political differences with other members. Another writers' organization describing itself as a union is the Pambansang Unyon ng mga Manunulat ng Pilipinas or PANULAT. A document called the Filipino Writers' Declaration of 1986 led to the founding of the organization. According to this declaration, there was a need for a national organization of writers committed to the protection, promotion, and enhancement of the economic welfare of Filipino writers; that such an organization of writers had an imperative task of defending the right to free expression; and that the development and propagation of a national culture was among the tasks of writers at present. More than 300 writers signed the declaration.

PANULAT describes itself as being committed to the welfare of its own members. Its more specific program of action includes initiating dialogues between writers and editors, publishers, film producers, donors, and various patrons of the arts, whether here or abroad, to secure writing grants, more and better outlets, and improved compensation for writers.

It also recognizes that the problems of writers should be related to the larger problems of Philippine society. The PANULAT declaration asserts that the group would also "support all national efforts at solving problems of underdevelopment, which are at the root of the economic difficulties writers suffer from and the general depression of opportunities in publishing and writing."

Elected founding chairperson and secretary-general during the first congress were Elmer M. Ordoñez and Reuel Molina Aguila, respectively. Bienvenido Lumbera and Nonilon V. Queaño succeeded them as chairperson and secretary-general of the organization, respectively.

PANULAT has sponsored a grassroots-writing workshop, a comics-writing workshop, a concert entitled *Panaghoy* (Lamentation), and a conference on arts and literature which coincided with the 20th anniversary of PAKSA. Among those who have been elected to the PANULAT Board of Directors and Secretariat are Joi Barrios, JJ dela Rosa, Tala Isla, Jose F. Lacaba, Rosario Cruz-Lucero, Francine Medina, Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, Rolando Santos, Roland B. Tolentino, and Ariel Valerio.

PANULAT distinguishes itself from other writers' unions and organizations by focusing on the organization and training of grassroots writers. In his opening remarks at the founding congress of PANULAT, Ordoñez said that the purpose of the group was "to form a national writers' union that looks after and beyond the needs of its members, committed to help the less fortunate in our society and having a stake in building a just, sovereign, and democratic country" (Ordoñez 1986).

In the 1980s, many groups were formed by those whose writing was focused on a particular literary genre. Among these organizations are the Linangan sa Imahen, Retorika at Anyo or LIRA, 1986, and Katha, a group of fictionists, 1989.

The Linangan ng Imahen, Retorika at Anyo or LIRA, which was organized in 1986, began when poets attending the Rio Alma Poetry Clinic at the Adarna office, Quezon Boulevard, organized themselves. Vim Nadera was elected president. Among the most active members of the group are Romulo Baquiran, Suzette Flores, Luna Sicat, and Maningning Miclat. LIRA holds its workshops every Saturday, with Rio Alma as facilitator. Other senior writers who have also influenced the group as advisers are Mike Bigornia and Teo Antonio. The group calls itself “bayanihan ng mga makata” (cooperative of poets). It has produced two anthologies of works by its members: ***Unang Bagting*** (First Chords), 1988, and ***Parikala*** (Parenthesis), 1990.

The idea to form a group of fictionists was explored in 1989 by Roland Tolentino, JJ de la Rosa, Joi Barrios, Ricky Nuñez, and Francine Medina. Tolentino was elected founding president of Katha. Elected as officers were de la Rosa, Barrios, Joey Baquiran, Honorio Bartolome de Dios, and Chit Balmaceda-Gutierrez. Other members were Luna Sicat, Carmelo Nadera, Eli Guieb, Joel Sayo, Abet Umil, Ian Victoriano, Noel Salonga, Ariel Valerio, Rolando Santos, Mes de Guzman, and Nenet Lachica.

A regular activity of Katha is its Sunday workshop, which has been held at various venues, among them the Heritage Art Center, the residences of its members, and the UP. These workshops have also served as venues for interaction with other writers. Among those who have given lectures for Katha are Mario Miclat, Gelacio Guillermo, Alice Guillermo, Romeo Dizon, Lualhati Bautista, and Jun Cruz Reyes. Senior writers Fidel Rillo and Romulo Sandoval have served as advisers to the group.

Three anthologies have been published by Katha. These are ***Engkwentro: Kalipunan ng mga Akda ng mga Kabataang Manunulat*** (Encounter: Anthology of Works by Young Writers), 1989; ***Impetu*** (Impetus), 1991; and ***Habilin*** (Message Before Leaving), 1991.

In 1988, a group of women writers formed the group Women Involved in Creating Cultural Alternatives (WICCA). Among its most active members are Marjorie Evasco, Fanny Llego, Grace Monte de Ramos, Merlinda Bobis, Ruth Elynia Mabanglo, Lina Sagaral Reyes, Nerissa Balce-Cortes, Rosario Cruz Lucero, and Lilia Quindoza-Santiago. The group has had several projects, among them a bookshop, a research project about the *babaylan* (shaman) in Bohol, WICCA greeting cards, several women’s workshops, and others.

Two writers’ groups are active at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. These are the Pambansang Linangan at Ugnayan ng mga Manunulat or PLUMA,

led by Rogelio Ordoñez and Ave Perez Jacob, and the Pandayan sa Literaturang Pilipino or PANDAY-LIPI, 1977, headed by Cesario Torres. PLUMA is a tri-sectoral organization of workers, students, and professional writers.

Other groups which have been holding their own literary workshops and readings are the following: the Bestiario Writers' Foundation, established in 1985, by Jose Y. Dalisay Jr., Isabel Banzon-Mooney, Benedicto Bitonio, and Gina Apostol, and later joined by Charlson Ong, Anthony F.V. Serrano, Ma. Elena Paterno, and Danton Remoto; and the Literary League of the Philippines, established in 1986 by Efren Abueg, Alfredo Tiamzon, and Angelito Santos.

Organizing, however, has not been limited to groups within Metro Manila. Many active groups are based in the regions, among them: the Gunglo Dagiti Mannurat nga Ilokano iti Filipinas Inc. (GUMIL-Filipinas) or the Ilokano Writers' Association of the Philippines Inc.; Sanghiran han Binisaya, based in Leyte and Samar, the Sumakwelan of Vernacular Writers in Western Visayas; the Samar Alliance; and the Lubas sa Dagang Bisaya or LUDABI of Cebuano writers.

The GUMIL is the umbrella organization of Ilocano writers here and abroad. Among its activities are regular and annual workshops and conferences. The group has come up with several publications, such as *Alintatao* (Pupil of the Eye), 1981, an anthology of short stories and poems in Ilocano, and ***Kurditan: Mga Kwentong Iluko*** (Canvas With Images: Ilocano Stories), 1988, an anthology of Ilocano short stories translated into Tagalog.

An important organization in the development of Waray literature is the Sanghiran San Binisaya. The organization was founded in 1909 by Norberto Romualdez Sr., with Jaime C. de Veyra, Casiano L. Trinchera, Francisco Alvarado, Illuminado Lucente, Juan Ricacho, Francisco Enfectana, Espiridion Brillo, and Eduardo Makabenta as its members.

Among the most notable achievements of the organization are the following: establishing the alphabet and the orthography for Waray in 1923; making the Sanghiran an academy similar to the Academia Real of Spain; and influencing the direction of Waray literature from 1910 to the 1950s.

In Western Visayas, considered the most durable among the Ilongo literary societies is the Sumakwelan. Founded in 1948, the group had among its members Ramon Muzones, Conrado Norada, Emilio Zaldivar, and Lino Moles. The organization continues today with chapters in Negros Occidental, Capiz, and Antique. Among its activities are contests, revivals, and seminars that promote and preserve Ilongo.

In other regions, writers have been active in other larger organizations, such as the Banaag in Cebu and the Kulturang Atin Foundation in Davao. Other writers have also been based in the academe, such as those active at the Silliman University.

In the revolutionary underground, a number of writers organized the Artista at Manunulat ng Sambayanan (Artists and Writers of the Nation) or ARMAS, founded in 1987 and affiliated with the National Democratic Front. Its members recognize the need not only for committed literature reminiscent of the line followed by the Philippine Writers' League in the 1940s and PAKSA in the 1970s, but also for writers to work in the interests of the basic masses and the national democratic revolution.

In a statement in Filipino issued during the Aquino administration, ARMAS declared that "revolutionary artists and writers should lay bare and combat the pro-imperialist and anti-people programs of the US-Aquino regime and uphold, in richly creative forms of art and literature, the people's struggle for democracy, at the same time that these writers and artists are struggling for their own welfare in society ... [T]hey should articulate to the people the vision for national democracy, become aware of the people's struggle and work in unity with and in the service of workers and peasants, who are in the forefront of the revolutionary struggle, from whom arise and for whom are created the great masterpieces of Filipino revolutionary writers and artists" (Guillermo 1990:32-33).

In general, there are three reasons why organizations are formed. One is to provide a venue for writers to develop their craft by training and interaction; another is to seek opportunities and venues for the publication of their works; a third is to articulate a particular vision of society through literature and advance this by means of a political agenda.

The organizational affiliation of writers may provide clues in the study of their works as one divines or attempts to determine their sources and influences. The mentorship of organizations by established writers like Virgilio S. Almario for GAT and later, LIRA, Fidel Rillo for Katha, and N.V.M. Gonzales for The Ravens, can exert an influence on the style and substance of a writer's craft. • R. Tolentino and J. Barrios with E. Tiamson, B. Lumbera, C. Nava, K. Picart, R. Duque, V. Sugbo, R. Baquiran, and R.C. Lucero.

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