

THE AMERICAN COLONIAL AND CONTEMPORARY TRADITIONS

The 20th century in the Philippines began in extremely challenging times. Within the space of a decade, 1896-1906, the Philippine Revolution broke out, the Philippine Republic was declared, three centuries of Spanish colonial rule came to an end, the Americans occupied the country in the wake of the Spanish-American War, and the Filipino-American War began, ended, and gave way to a new government under US colonial auspices.

These events had far-reaching consequences in the shaping of 20th-century Philippine literature. Spanish, spoken and read by only 10 percent of the population at the close of Spanish rule, quickly declined, though the Spanish cultural legacy remained an important constituent of Filipino culture. English was introduced as an “official language” and it grew in prestige as the Americanization of Philippine society advanced. Filipinos were plugged into a cultural world in which American and, through American mediation, Western literary and intellectual traditions seemed the axis around which significant meaning revolved.

The Philippines, of course, was not empty space waiting to be filled with new meanings. Filipinos entered the 20th century with a rich load of cultural memory and experience. Through the 19th century, the “modern age” had taken shape in the Philippines with the rise of secularism and a “culture of literacy,” the opening of the Philippine countryside with the growth of commercial agriculture and global trade, and the emergence of nationalism.

For this reason, 20th-century Philippine literature is the story not merely of the reception of new cultural influences but also of creative adaptation of or resistance to these influences. At the same time, it is a story played out within the larger drama of a society that has to grapple with the facts of its own internal divisions in its search for a more egalitarian national community.

There has been a great deal of continuity in Philippine literary history. Yet, at the same time, there has been a series of significant breaks, times of heightened cultural crises when, with greater self-consciousness than at other times, Filipino artists confronted the national situation and tried to move society on to a higher plane. These cultural “crossroads” came in the 1900s with the arrival of the Americans, in the 1940s with the Japanese Occupation, in the 1970s with the imposition of Martial Law, and in 1986 with the “democratic restoration.” Despite homogenizing trends in Philippine cultural life set into motion by colonialism and the state, Philippine literature remains marked by a great deal of diversity, written in many languages, and expressive of a wide range of experience and viewpoints. Despite the forces that pull the society apart, Philippine literature is a definably national body of experience.

Poetry

The early 20th century saw a complex of tendencies. On one hand, it witnessed the flourishing and early withering of the Filipino-Spanish literature that evolved in the 19th century. Poets like Fernando Ma. Guerrero, Cecilio Apostol, Jesus Balmori, Claro M. Recto, and Manuel Bernabe brought Filipino poetry in Spanish to high levels of refinement. Guerrero's ***Crisalidas*** (Chrysalis), 1914, Apostol's posthumous ***Pentelicas*** (White Marble), 1941, Balmori's ***Mi casa de nipa*** (My Nipa Hut), 1941, Claro M. Recto's ***Bajo los cocoteros*** (Under the Coconut Trees), 1911, and Manuel Bernabe's ***Cantos del tropico*** (Songs of the Tropics), 1938, show how well Filipino writers had made Spanish their own.

In Tagalog and other Philippine languages, 19th century developments were carried forward. Such antiphonal forms as the *duplo*— stylized as the Tagalog *balagtasan*, the Ilocano *bukanegan*, the Pampango *crissotan*— as well as romantic and philosophical poetry were elaborated upon, refined, or contemporized. The resources of Tagalog poetic speech were developed and expanded in the works of such writers as Lope K. Santos, Julian Cruz Balmaseda, Pedro Gatmaitan, Iñigo Ed. Regalado, Cirio H. Panganiban, Jose Corazon de Jesus, and Florentino Collantes. Books of verses of the period included Balmaseda's ***Sa Bayan ni Plaridel*** (In the Town of Plaridel), 1913, and Gatmaitan's ***Tungkos ng Alaala*** (Bouquet of Memories), 1913.

Santos, perhaps better known for his work as a novelist and grammarian, was a gifted poet with a remarkable range. He wrote verses that were energetic yet well crafted, in which he combined his gift of wit with his intimate knowledge of social problems and mores. His skill is evident in his verse narrative, ***Ang Pangginggera*** (The Pangginggera Card Player), 1912, the character portrait of a woman whose life is destroyed by an addiction to gambling, and in the three volume ***Puso at Diwa*** (Heart and Spirit), 1908, 1913, 1924.

De Jesus, popularly called Huseng Batute, produced such works as ***Mga Gintong Dahon*** (Golden Leaves), 1920, his first book of poems, and ***Sa Dakong Silangan*** (In the East), 1928, an allegorical verse narrative of Philippine history under Spain and the United States. A prolific bard, he composed balagtasan verses, patriotic poems, satirical pieces, as well as lyrics for songs, including the famous “Bayan Ko” (My Country), 1928, set to music by Constancio de Guzman. The range of De Jesus' achievements showed the capacity of the language to carry or assume varied stances and nuances of thought and feeling.

In the other regions, Pampango Juan Crisostomo Soto, “the father of Pampango literature,” Cebuano poet-laureate Vicente Ranudo, Ilongo Magdalena Jalandoni, Ilocano Marcelino Peña-Crisologo, and Pangasinense Pablo Mejia stamped native poetic traditions with a kind of classicism as they consolidated and refined the twin legacy of Spanish and native poetry. Early poets writing in languages other than Tagalog include Cebuano Escolastico Morre, Amando Osorio, and Nicolas Rafols;

Salvador Ciocon, Flavio Zaragoza Cano, and Jose Ma. Ingalla; and Waray Francisco Alvarado, Norberto Romualdez, Illuminado Lucente, and Vicente I. de Veyra.

The literary efflorescence of the native languages was partly the product of the advance of nationalism at the turn of the century. It was also a defensive reaction against the new cultural order the Americans were building in the country. Interest in the promotion and refinement of local languages found expression in the burst of vernacular publishing, the mushrooming of language associations and “academies” in various parts of the country, and the scholarly labors of Filipino philologists in the production of grammars and dictionaries, the literary cultivation of native languages, and the writing and reading of texts in these languages.

There was the tendency for poetry to become too rarefied, self-absorbed, repetitive, and even trivial. Often, poets exhibited an excessive preoccupation with conventions largely based on Spanish metrics, such as the insistence on strict rules of rime and meter, with “purifying” diction, and with the mining of the affective values of verbal art. However, the pressures of social reality prevented literature from feeding on itself and falling into permanent decadence.

Nationalism and the need to engage contemporary social and political problems worked against the decadence of old forms. Patriotic and social themes were infused into the romance mode, as in the case of the works of poets like Pedro Gatmaitan and Benigno Ramos. Poets were often journalists who, like Jose Corazon de Jesus and Lope K. Santos, wrote opinion columns, reports, and satirical verse commentaries on current events. They were involved in the political and social life of the times. This tradition of social analysis was continued by Amado V. Hernandez in the decades that followed.

American rule introduced new challenges in the literary field, particularly as the new colonial rule was institutionalized with the reorganization of local governments, the establishment of the Philippine Assembly in 1907, and the establishment of a public school system along American lines. In April 1900, President William McKinley issued a directive to the Philippine Commission, making English the official medium of instruction in the public schools. With the arrival of the Thomasites in 1901 and the training of a new corps of teachers and intellectuals in such institutions as the Philippine Normal School, 1901, and the University of the Philippines, 1908, what was called *Sajonismo* or Anglo-American culture gained efficacy and prestige.

In the cultural field, the Filipino response was quite complex, ranging from resistance and subversion to acceptance and assimilation. In part, vigorous literary activity in the local languages was neither just a response to liberal US policies after the Philippine-American War ended nor a reflex of years of Spanish neglect. It was also a reaction to the increasing Westernization of Philippine society.

Modern trends, apart from those which came from or through the United States, found their way into the practice of Spanish and vernacular poets in the early 20th century. Writers who were educated in Spanish accessed modern trends by reading the works of such Spanish and South American modernists as Ruben Dario, Antonio Machado, and Federico Garcia Lorca.

It was, however, in Filipino poetry in English that “modernity” came to be most self-consciously cultivated. In 1921, Lorenzo Paredes published the first collection of English poems, *Reminiscences*. The early English poets included M. de Gracia Concepcion, Procopio Solidum, Natividad Marquez, Luis Dato, Aurelio S. Alvero, Angela Manalang-Gloria, Trinidad Tarrosa-Subido, and Rafael Zulueta da Costa. However, Jose Garcia Villa, more than any other Filipino writer, was the first to deploy the English language in creating a new style and sensibility in Philippine poetry. In such books of poetry as *Have Come, Am Here*, 1942, and *Volume Two*, 1949, Villa, working under the influence of Anglo-American poets like Gerard Manley Hopkins, Marianne Moore, Gertrude Stein, and e.e. cummings showed the precocity with which Filipinos had adopted English. His case, however, illustrated well the risks of alienation for a native poet working in a foreign language.

Given the contrary impulses in Philippine society, the writers debated the issues of “tradition” and “modernity,” as illustrated in the discussions that engaged the Tagalog writers’ groups Ilaw at Panitik and Aklatang Bayan. This debate intensified in the 1930s when Philippine society was in a time of malaise owing to such factors as the economic depression, the escalation of class unrest, the threat of global fascism, and the change of government to Commonwealth status in 1935. Many writers strongly felt the need to make literature a more effective vehicle of contemporary ideas and change.

The Tagalog writers’ group called Kapisanang Panitikan, organized in 1935, staged a revolt in behalf of artistic freedom against what the Panitikan writers saw to be the debilitating commercialism of the popular magazines, routinized repetition of old forms and conventions, and hostility to artistic experimentation. The group, which includes Alejandro G. Abadilla, Teodoro Agoncillo, Clodualdo del Mundo, Brigido Batungbakal, Jesus Arceo, Salvador Barros, and Genoveva Edroza-Matute, publicized its cause with a book-burning rally at Plaza Moriones in Tondo on 2 March 1940. The group threw into the flames literary works “that [it thought] did not merit to be passed on to posterity” (Manuud 1967:386). The leader of the literary rebels was Abadilla, whose use of free verse, contempt for convention, and iconoclastic advocacy of the individual sensibility as the organizing principle of art and knowledge sparked intense debates among Tagalog poets.

At the same time, there was a similar ferment among English writers. There were those who spoke for art-for-art’s sake, like Jose Garcia Villa, and those who formed the avant-garde group of English writers called Veronicans, organized in 1935. Others urged a more socially engaged art, like writers Salvador P. Lopez,

Frederico Mangahas, Arturo Rotor, and Manuel Arguilla. Given the fact that English writing had developed largely in the hothouse atmosphere of the universities, it was understandable that while Tagalog writers raised their voice of protest in behalf of artistic freedom, their counterparts in English were calling for greater social responsibility.

World War II interrupted this debate. The Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945, saw a decline in literary activity as publications were suspended or restricted and as the Japanese tried to promote a cultural reorientation away from American influence towards a consciousness of a common “Oriental” past. The Japanese interregnum, however, was too short to effect long-term changes.

In the postwar period, English writing entered its most vigorous phase. Poets like Manuel Viray, Dominador Ilio, Nick Joaquin, Edith L. Tiempo, Ricaredo Demetillo, Carlos Angeles, Virginia Moreno, Godofredo Burce Bunao, Alejandrino Hufana, Emmanuel Torres, and Oscar de Zuñiga produced work that showed the facility with which Filipino writers had appropriated the forms and language of English.

Tagalog poets continued to build on tradition. Postwar poets included Teo S. Baylen, Gonzalo K. Flores, Manuel Car. Santiago, Manuel Principe Bautista, Celestino Vega, Emilio Mar. Antonio, and Jose Domingo Karasig. In the postwar era, Amado V. Hernandez entered his mature period, producing such works as ***Isang Dipang Langit*** (A Stretch of Sky), 1961, a collection of poems, and ***Bayang Malaya*** (A Nation Free), 1969, a long narrative poem which combined historical and autobiographical material in recreating the peasant struggle against Japanese and Filipino oppressors. In his attempt to weld together the social imagination of Rizal with the resources of Tagalog poetry, Hernandez stands as an important writer of our time.

In poetry in the native languages, traditional, “oral,” romantic poetry still remained persuasive, as shown in the popularity of such poets as the Cebuano Vicente Padriga and poet-president Carlos P. Garcia; the Ilocano Leon Pichay, dubbed the “King of Ilocano Poets,” and Godofredo Reyes; Pampango Amado Yuzon; the Waray poets Illuminado Lucente and Eduardo Makabenta; Bicolano Manuel Fuentesbella; and the “Trinidad Poetica Ilonga” (Trinity of Poets): Flavio Zaragoza Cano, Serapion C. Torre, and Delfin Gumban. This was due not simply to the unevenness of cultural conditions across the country. Through time, a durable body of metaphors related to love, nature, home, and motherland had remained fertile ground in which poets could inscribe and reinscribe collective and personal desire.

In Tagalog poetry, however, *modernismo* gained ascendancy in the 1960s with the work of young, university-educated poets. The most self-conscious of the modernists were such poets as Epifanio San Juan Jr., Federico Licsi Espino, Rogelio Mangahas, Rio Alma, Bienvenido Ramos, and Lamberto E. Antonio. The anthology ***Manlilikha, Mga Piling Tula: 1961-67*** (Creator, Selected Poems: 1961-67), 1967, was the book that announced the advent of a “new” poetry in Tagalog. Drawing inspiration from such sources as T.S. Eliot and the French

Symbolists, their poetry was experimental in temper, literate instead of oral in orientation, and dense in metaphoric substance. It was also a poetry often mannered and obscure.

At the same time, young poets based in Ateneo de Manila like Rolando S. Tinio, Bienvenido Lumbera, and Jose F. Lacaba launched the *bagay* (“thing” or “appropriate”) movement which, drawing from such sources as Rainer Maria Rilke, T.S. Eliot, and the American Imagists, sought to free poetry from loose rhetoric and emotionalism. They wrote poetry of understated effects, spare, colloquial, and rooted in concrete particulars. Tinio himself, who wrote such books of poetry as *Sitsit sa Kuliglig* (Calling the Cricket), 1972, and *Dunung-Dunungan* (Know-It-All), 1975, wrote with equal skill in English, Tagalog, and that mix of Tagalog and English called “Taglish,” which had developed as the idiom of urban intellectuals.

In the other Philippine literatures, even as the literary politics did not reach the same degree of polarization as in Manila, bilingual poets who used English and their native tongue, like Cebuano Junne Canizares and Ricardo Patalinjug, and Ilocano Benjamin Pascual and Arnold Molina Azurin also introduced new styles and sensibilities to regional poetic traditions.

The late 1960s constituted a pivotal period. The sense of deepening social crisis indexed by the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1969, the anti-Vietnam War protest, and the rise of radical student activism, brought writers once more to directly confront the issue of the writer’s role in social change. A key event of this period was the establishment of the Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Samabayanan or PAKSA in 1971, led by Bienvenido Lumbera, Jose F. Lacaba, Virgilio Almario, and others. Marxism was an important influence of the period and Mao Zedong’s *Talks at the Yen-an Forum* became a key critical text for writers. At another remove, the interest in the writer as agent in social transformation drew from the dialectics of art and politics which had been a long running theme in Philippine literary history.

The period of Martial Law, begun in 1972 and officially lifted in 1981, restricted the debate and practice among writers. An “underground” literature, however, carried out a radical critique of Philippine society. Poets in this stream included Clarita Roja, aka Mila Aguilar; Servando Magbanua, aka Jose Percival Estocado; Jason Montana; Kris Montañez; Alan Jazmines; and Levy Balgos de la Cruz. Even as responses to the martial-law situation varied, the experience, in sum, strengthened and tempered the writers’ understanding of the complexities of social reality as well as the demands of their craft.

Today, Philippine poetry is marked by high artistry and the creative integrations of various impulses present in the tradition. Excellent English poetry continues to be written by poets like Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta, Gemino Abad, Alfred Yuson, Ricardo de Ungria, Fatima Lim, Danton Remoto, and many others. Outstanding

poets of the period are Cirilo Bautista, whose *The Cave and Other Poems*, 1968, and *The Archipelago*, 1970, show great technical range and vigor of imagination; and Alfredo Navarro Salanga, author of such fine collections as *Commentaries*, *Meditations*, *Messages*, 1985, and *Turtle Voices in Uncertain Weather*, 1989.

Women writers like Marra PL. Lanot, Ruth Elynia Mabanglo, Marjorie Evasco, Benilda Santos, Joi Barrios, Merlinda Bobis, Isabel Banzon-Mooney, Lina Sagalar Reyes, Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, and others have produced not only well-crafted poetry in English and Tagalog but have enriched literature with a contemporary feminist perspective.

At the same time, poetry in Tagalog remains central and vital, as in the works of Rio Alma, Lacaba, Teo Antonio, Edgardo Maranan, Jesus Manuel Santiago, Fidel Rillo, Tomas Agulto, Mike Bigornia, and others. Almario, whose prolific work in poetry and criticism has made him the “voice” of contemporary Tagalog poetry, has produced an impressive body of work that includes *Doktrinang Anakpawis* (The Doctrine of the Working Class), 1979, *Mga Retrato at Rekwerdo* (Photographs and Souvenirs), 1984, and *Palipad-Hangin* (Hints), 1985. His poetry is both sensitive to the historical moment as well as rooted in native poetic traditions. Lacaba, who authored *Mga Kagila-Gilalas na Pakikipagsapalaran* (Amazing Adventures), 1979, is an influential contemporary poet. Though his work is sparer, his barbed, colloquial poetry is among the most admired today.

Regional poetry—as in the works in Cebuano of Ernesto Lariosa or Temistokles Adlawan; in Ilocano by Peter La. Julian or Herminio Beltran Jr.; in Ilongo by John Paul Tia, Peter S. Nery, or Lucila Hosillos; or in Kinaray-a by Aleks Santos and Milagros C. Germia—remains a vital component of Philippine poetry.

Such strands have made Philippine poetry an extremely rich and textured tapestry of artistic achievement.

Short Story

The Filipino short story began with the *dagli*, the short prose narrative sketch variously inspired by tale, anecdote, exemplum, and journalistic report. Among its early practitioners were writers like Isabelo de los Reyes, the prolific intellectual who wrote in Spanish, Ilocano, and Tagalog; the Pampango Juan Crisostomo Soto; and Vicente Sotto, called “the father of Cebuano literature” for his pioneering work not only in the short story but also in Cebuano theater, journalism, and language. Tagalog writers like Valeriano Hernandez-Peña, Lope K. Santos, Patricio Mariano, Rosauro Almario, and Carlos Ronquillo wrote short prose narratives that paved the way for the rise of the short story form.

The expansion of journalism in the 20th century created a market for short stories,

called *kuwento* in Tagalog and *sugilanon* in Cebuano and Ilongo. Stories and novels were often the items that sold the newspapers and magazines of the day. Mastery of the form increased with each generation of writers, as one marks in the Tagalog stories of Brigido Batungbakal, Teofilo Sauco, Jose Esperanza Cruz, Rosalia Aguinaldo, Cirio H. Panganiban, and Amado V. Hernandez. An important writer of the early period was Deogracias A. Rosario, dubbed “Father of the Tagalog Short Story” for his work in elevating the early prose-narrative sketch to the more bodied and tightly structured short story of today.

By the late 1920s, the short story in English had also developed a certain maturity of form and sureness of idiom. Early attempts, influenced by such models as Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, and O. Henry, appeared in such magazines as *Philippines Free Press*, 1905, *Philippines Herald Magazine*, 1920. A.V.H. Hartendorp’s *Philippine Magazine*, 1929, and campus publications like *College Folio*, 1910, of the University of the Philippines.

The first book of short stories in English was Zoilo M. Galang’s *Box of Ashes and Other Stories*, 1925. Writers like Jorge Bocobo, Loreto Paras-Sulit, Paz Latorena, Teofilo D. Agcaoili, and Amador Daguio, pioneered in the form. By the late 1920s, a period of awkward and imitative “apprenticeship” had ended as shown in the works of Paz Marquez-Benitez, whose story “Dead Stars,” 1925, marked a coming-of-age of the short story in English, and Jose Garcia Villa, whose *Footnote to Youth: Tales of the Philippines and Others*, 1933, was published in the United States.

Through the period of the Philippine Commonwealth, established on 4 July 1935 and the post-World War II era, the English short story came to be so naturalized as to become an important part of Filipino literary achievement. The important writers included Arturo Rotor, who wrote *The Wound and the Scar*, 1937, and Manuel Arguilla, author of the classic *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife*, 1940, who did not only produce memorable sketches of Philippine rural life but also invested the English language with the “naturalness” of local speech. Another notable writer of the period was Carlos Bulosan, the Filipino immigrant who created an impressive body of work in the United States, which included the story collection entitled *The Laughter of My Father*, 1944.

The temper of the troubled 1930s was such that social realism animated the literature of the period, giving to the stories of the time qualities of immediacy and specificity. The intellectual change could be seen in the declarations of the writers themselves. In 1927, the UP Writers’ Club issued a founding manifesto in which the members called themselves “faithful followers of Shakespeare,” and declared: “Our shibboleth shall be: ART shall not be a means to an End, but AN END IN ITSELF” (Icasiano 1937:1). Twelve years later, the Philippine Writers’ League was established on 26 February 1939. Its organizers were also among the founders of the UP Writers’ Club, which declared radically different principles, saying: “Since economic injustice and political oppression are the enemies of culture, it becomes the clear duty of the writer to lend his arm to the struggle

against injustice and oppression in every form. ...” (Arguilla et al. 1940:102-103).

The 1930s heightened the social consciousness of writers and led to the writing of more purposive fiction. Growth marked the short story in Philippine languages. In Cebuano, Marcel M. Navarra “inaugurated” the modern short story in Cebuano, and the genre was further developed by writers like Eugenio Viacrucis and later, Godofredo Roperos and Junne Canizares. In Ilongo, “modernism” was also an issue raised by writers like Lorenzo Dilag Fajardo and Abe S. Gonzales, who were attempting to depart from the more traditional practice of writers like Delfin Gumban, Miguela Montelibano, and Serapion Torre. In Ilocano, Bicolano and the other languages, practitioners developed the form into an ampler, more supple vehicle for local experience. Other short story writers of the 1930s were Ilocano Benjamin Pascual, Pampango Rosario Tuason-Baluyut, Bicolano Clemente Alejandria and Nicolasa Ponte Perfecto, Pangasinense Juan Villamil, Leonarda Carrera, Nena Mata, and Francisco Rosario; and Cebuano Maria Kabigon.

In Tagalog, the form flourished in the work of writers like Brigido Batungbakal, Macario Pineda, Hernando R. Ocampo, and Genoveva Edroza-Matute, the last being one of the finest Tagalog short story writers of her generation. Exposure of Tagalog short story writers to modern influences had honed their craft, such that the stories of writers like Pineda and Edroza-Matute matched the best that was written in English at the time. The achievement of writers like Pineda and Edroza-Matute was consolidated and extended by other writers, among them Mabini Rey Centeno, Serafin Guinigundo, Liwayway Arceo, Andres Cristobal Cruz, and Buenaventura S. Medina Jr.

Ironically, the Japanese Occupation had certain salutary effects on the development of Tagalog fiction. With English discouraged, commercialism moderated, and “Malayan” pride developed, prewar English writers, like N.V.M. Gonzalez, Juan C. Laya and E. Aguilar Cruz, turned to writing in Tagalog. ***Ang 25 Pinakamabuting Maikling Kathang Pilipino ng 1943*** (The 25 Best Pilipino Short Stories of 1943), 1944, an anthology published during the Japanese Occupation, showcased the maturity reached by the Tagalog short story over the 1930s.

After the return of the Americans in 1945, however, English writing came back in full force. Creative work expanded with the stories of writers in English like Francisco Arcellana, N.V.M. Gonzalez, Nick Joaquin, Bienvenido Santos, Kerima Polotan-Tuvera, D. Paulo Dizon, Estrella Alfon, Edilberto Tiempo, Edith L. Tiempo, Juan Gatbonton, Aida Rivera-Ford, Gregorio Brilliantes, and Gilda Cordero-Femando. Important story collections of this period included Joaquin’s ***Prose and Poems***, 1952, Gonzalez’s ***Children of the Ash-Covered Loam and Other Stories***, 1954, and Santos’ ***You Lovely People***, 1955.

While most English writing gravitated towards urban and middle class experience,

in part because of the class background of the writers, there was nevertheless much internal diversity. The range of social life explored included the old Manila of Joaquin, the Mindoro backwoods of Gonzalez, the Tondo of Santos, the Cebu of Alfon, and the provincial Tarlac of Brillantes. Along with other writers like Ibrahim Jubaira, Sinai Hamada, Rony Diaz, Silvino Epistola, and others, short story writers created a rich mosaic of Philippine life.

In the 1960s, the mood was one that favored experiment and innovation, the testing of the limits of conventions of technique and thought. In the Tagalog short story, the appearance of *Mga Agos sa Disyerto* (Streams in the Desert), 1964, introduced stories more markedly realist in temper, in their language, treatment of contemporary urban life, portrayal of characters, and stylistic devices that included the “stream-of-consciousness” technique. Contributors to the volume were some of the most talented Tagalog fictionists of the postwar period: Edgardo M. Reyes, Rogelio Sicat, Efren Abueg, Eduardo B. Reyes, and Rogelio Ordoñez. Exposed not only to the works of their English-writing contemporaries but such foreign authors as Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Turgenev, and Dostoevski, these writers offered an alternative to a popular fiction that tended to be idealist and escapist in character.

At this time, notable stories were also being produced in the other languages, by writers like Juan S.P. Hidalgo Jr., Gregorio Laconsay, Constante Casabar, and Marcelino Foronda Jr. in Ilocano; Ana T. Calixto and Rogelio Basilio in Bicolano; Isabelo Sobrevega, Juanito Marcella, and Ismaelita Floro-Luza in Ilongo; and Eugenio Viacrusis, Godofredo Roperos, Nazario Bas, and Porfirio de la Torre in Cebuano.

In English fiction, the influence of such Western movements as surrealism and existentialism led to a great deal of literary experimentation, as in the work of Wilfrido D. Nollado, which influenced many young writers who saw in his highly sensuous and surreal pieces both refuge and defense against social anxieties and the confining rule of formalism in the academe.

In the 1960s, fresh work in fiction was done by young writers like Ninotchka Rosca, Erwin Castillo, Luis Teodoro Jr., Antonio Enriquez, Norma Mirafior, Wilfredo Pascua Sanchez, and Renato E. Madrid, aka Fr. Rodolfo Villanueva. However, deepening social and political crisis, as indexed in the establishment of PAKSA in 1971, caught up with the writers. In the years immediately preceding the declaration of Martial Law on 21 September 1972, political pressures transformed a generation of intellectuals so that writers who, only a few years earlier cultivated Western values of angst and ennui, came to be politically radicalized.

The immediate pre-Martial Law period, marked by such events as the First Quarter Storm of 1970 and the “Plaza Miranda Massacre” of 1971, changed the intellectual situation drastically. An important phenomenon was the rise of Marxism. Socialist ideas first entered the country at the turn of the century,

inspired trade unions and peasant organizations, and found embodiment in the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1930. Marxist ideas, as expressed not only in Lenin, Gorki, and Plekhanov, but American writers like Sinclair Lewis, Clifford Odets, and James Farrell, influenced writers of the 1930s. It was, however, in the late 1960s and the years that followed that the communist armed movement reached unprecedented heights; Marxism, as mediated by Chinese rather than American communism, also emerged as a major intellectual force in Philippine life.

The principle of “literature from the masses, to the masses” spurred the use of local languages (as against English), a new respect for folk and popular forms, more direct and simpler forms of communication, and a view that demystified the writer’s role in the creation of culture. The short story acquired a sharper social edge, as shown in the Tagalog stories of Rogelio Sicat, Dominador Mirasol, Domingo Landicho, Ricardo Lee, Fanny Garcia, Ave Perez Jacob, and others. The “politicization” of fiction is illustrated in *Sigwa* (Storm), 1972, an anthology of stories by E. San Juan Jr., Efren Abueg, Norma Miraflor, Ricky Lee, Wilfrido Virtusio, and Fanny Garcia.

Martial Law stifled creativity. Newspapers and magazines were suspended and media came under strict government surveillance as the Marcos government attempted an “ideological” reformation of society. The war in the countryside also cost the lives of young writers, like Emmanuel Lacaba and Ma. Lorena Barros, who had taken to the field to join cause with the New People’s Army and who were both killed in 1976. Resistance spawned an “underground” literature that continues to this day, illustrated by such publications as *Magsasaka: Ang Bayaning Di-Kilala* (Farmer: The Unknown Hero), 1984, an anthology of protest writing. Even “above ground,” however, what was called a “literature of circumvention” (and even of open dissent) developed, coming to a head after the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983 and the collapse of the Marcos government in 1986.

Today, the short story remains a vibrant and varied form in several languages. This is shown in works in the regional languages: in the stories of Cebuano writers Dionisio Gabriel, Ricardo Patalinjug, Temistokles Adlawan, and Gremer Chan Reyes; Ilongo Isabelo S. Sobrevega, Juanito C. Marcella, Ismaelita Floro-Luza, and Alicia Tan Gonzales; and Ilocano Jose Bragado, Juan Hidalgo Jr., and Reynaldo Duque. In particular, the vitality of the short story is seen in the works in English and Tagalog of writers like Alfred Yuson, Leoncio Deriada, Edgardo Maranan, Mario Miclat, Lualhati Bautista, Eric Gamalinda, Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, Jun Cruz Reyes, Rosario Cruz Lucero, Charlson Ong, Jose Dalisay Jr., and others.

Novel

Earlier than in the rest of Southeast Asia, a high standard for the novel form was

set by Jose Rizal's *Noli me tangere* (Touch Me Not), 1887, and *El filibusterismo* (Subversion), 1891. Conditions of war and colonial rule, however, fostered cultural disorientations that militated against a concerted intellectual advance on the basis of past accomplishments. In the 20th century, however, the novel developed, if unevenly, as a major form.

Early Filipino novelists drew not only directly from Rizal or the Western novel, texts of which had begun to find their way into the country in the 19th century, but also from such antecedent forms as the metrical romance and the moral tract. Hence, there was a hybrid, provisional character to such novels as *Salawahang Pag-ibig* (Inconstant Love), 1900-1902, by Lope K. Santos, *Capitan Bensio* (Captain Bensio), 1907, by Gabriel Beato Francisco, and *Ang Kasaysayan ng Magkaibigang si Nena at si Neneng* (The Story of the Friends Nena and Neneng), 1905, by Valeriano Hernandez Peña.

However, the situation at the beginning of the century—with ascendant nationalism, the rise of labor unions, and the entry of socialist literature—was such that many novels, while hewing close to the romance mode, were animated with patriotic and social, even socialist, themes. In time, too, the vernacular novel came to acquire a more full-bodied form. This was the case in such novels as *Banaag at Sikat* (Glimmer and Light), 1905, by Lope K. Santos, *Pinaglahuan* (Eclipsed), 1907, by Faustino Aguilar, *Madaling Araw* (Daybreak), 1909, by Iñigo Ed. Regalado, *Pusong Walang Pag-ibig* (Heart Without Love), 1910, by Roman Reyes, *Ang Tala sa Panghulo* (The Star at Panghulo), 1913, by Patricio Mariano, *Anino ng Kahapon* (Shadow of Yesteryears), 1907, by Francisco Laksamana, and *Isa Pang Bayani* (One More Hero), 1915, by Juan Arcsiwals.

The most prominent in this group of writers was Lope K. Santos, a versatile intellectual who not only contributed to literature, journalism, and language development (he is called the “Father of Tagalog”) but also participated in trade unionism and politics. He was a writer of considerable skill and energy but his varied interests and the material conditions of literary production in his time tended to dissipate his talents. Undoubtedly the most accomplished novelist of the early 20th century was Faustino Aguilar. His *Pinaglahuan* (Eclipsed), 1907, *Nangalunod sa Katihan* (Drowned Ashore), 1911, and *Lihim ng Isang Pulo* (Secret of an Island), 1927, demonstrated not only a clear understanding of social realities, such as foreign domination and agrarian exploitation, but admirable control over artistic material.

The novel also made its appearance in other Philippine languages. Pioneering works were the Pampango novel *Lidia*, 1907, by Juan Crisostomo Soto; *Ilocano Biag ti Maysa a Lakay wenno Nakaam-ames a Bales* (Life of an Old Man, or A Dreadful Revenge), 1909, by Mariano Gaerlan; *Benjamin*, 1907, by Angel Magahum; and *Cebuano Wala’y Igsoon* (No Siblings), 1912, by Juan Villagonzalo.

In the pre-World War II period, the novel in the regional languages flourished with

the work of writers like Aurelio V. Tolentino, Magdalena Jalandoni, Sulpicio Osorio, Flaviano Boquecosa, Ramon Muzones, Conrado Norada, Martin Abellana, Nazario Bas, and Lorenzo Fajardo Dilag.

Better known as a playwright, Aurelio Tolentino illustrates the not uncommon case of Filipino writers writing with equal facility in two or three languages. A writer in Pampango, Tagalog, and Spanish, Tolentino produced 69 titles in various genres, including five Tagalog novels, three of which—including the well known *Buhay* (Life), 1909, and *Ing Buac nang Ester* (Ester's Hair), 1911—he also wrote in Pampango. Magdalena Jalandoni pioneered as a woman writer in the Philippines. She wrote some 50 novels, in addition to hundreds of poems, short stories, essays, and plays. Her best known work included *Ang mga Tunoc sang Isa ka Bulac* (A Flower's Thorns), 1916, *Ang Bantay sang Patyo* (The Graveyard Caretaker), 1925, and *Ang Dalaga sa Tindahan* (The Lad in the Market), 1935.

The first three decades of the century is generally referred to as “the Golden Age” of literature in Philippine languages. Up to 1940, around 1,000 novels, including translations and adaptations of foreign works, were produced. The novel in Spanish, by authors like Jesus Balmori and Antonio M. Abad also continued to be written, at least for a time, and the first Filipino novel in English, *A Child of Sorrow*, 1921, by Zoilo M. Galang, made its appearance. The field, however, belonged to the “vernaculars.”

The vigor of the vernaculars drew, in part, from the fact that the early decades of the century were a time when Spanish had already declined as a prestige language and English was still in the process of being propagated. Thus, there was high interest in writings in the native languages. Pangasinense Maria Magsano and Cebuano Gardeopatra Quijano were two women novelists whose works were serialized in the commercial magazines before World War II and who continued writing up to the 1950s.

The market demand for novels, either for serialization in popular magazines or adaptation in a rising Tagalog movie industry, spurred literary production. In 1930, there were 22 Tagalog publications with a circulation of 237,494. This rose to 56 publications with a circulation of 527,796 in 1940.

Writers like Fausto Galauran, Susana C. de Guzman, Nemesio Caravana, and Teofilo Saucó, whose Tagalog novels were translated into other Philippine languages, enjoyed large readerships. The marriage of literature and cinema popularized such novels as Galauran's *Doktor Kuba* (Dr. Hunchback), 1933, Antonio Sempio's *Punyal na Ginto* (Golden Dagger), 1933, and Lazaro Francisco's *Sa Paanan ng Krus* (At the Foot of the Cross), 1937.

However, the market also led to an enervation of artistic standards. With the proliferation of vernacular magazines in the 1930s, there was a constant demand

for stories and novels. The fact of serial publication in magazines also occasioned the production of hurried, makeshift, and formulaic texts. While mass fiction had its own dynamic and values, writers had to grapple with problems posed by the widening gulf between “high” and “low” literature, or what came to be called *pampanitikan* (the “literary”) and *pambakya* (the “vulgar”).

On the eve of the Pacific War, the novel in English showed signs of coming into its own, with the work of Juan C. Laya, and N.V.M. Gonzalez. Laya’s *His Native Soil*, 1941, is written in a conventional mode and deals with a recurrent theme in Philippine writing: the ambivalent and often ineffectual role of the educated Filipino intellectual as agent for meaningful social change. Gonzalez’s *The Winds of April*, 1941, on the other hand, is the autobiographical retelling of a young Filipino writer’s intellectual passage as he moves from country to city. It is interesting not just as a document. Like Villa in poetry, Gonzalez “enters” into an alien language and claims from it something that speaks of local experience in a “new” way. Unlike Villa, however, Gonzalez returned from that journey; Villa left for the United States in 1929.

The war cut this development short as it also saw the death of such writers as Manuel Arguilla, Alfredo Elfren Litiatco, and Francisco Icasiano. It was only after the war that the publishing of novels resumed. Even the momentous experience of the war, however, did not produce a great novel, although novels about the wartime experience—like Stevan Javellana’s *Without Seeing the Dawn*, 1947, and Edilberto Tiempo’s *Watch in the Night*, 1953—were written and published.

As postwar reconstruction progressed and after Philippine independence was proclaimed on 4 July 1946, the novel in English entered an important period with the work of writers like N.V.M. Gonzalez, Nick Joaquin, Bienvenido Santos, Kerima Polotan-Tuvera, and Edilberto Tiempo.

One of the most distinctive voices in Philippine literature, Joaquin has explored, with greater energy than any other 20th-century Filipino writer, the dilemma of Filipino cultural identity in a body of works that includes fiction, drama, poetry, and essays. His two novels, line *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*, 1961, and *Cave and Shadows*, 1983, and novellas show a writer with a developed historical imagination and an original literary style. One of the most skillful of Filipino short story writers, Gonzalez is the author of *A Season of Grace*, 1956, a portrayal of frontier life in Mindoro which is a masterpiece of restraint, and *The Bamboo Dancers*, 1959, a novel that uses Jamesian techniques to lay bare the sterility of the uncommitted modern intellectual. Santos has produced fiction that has ranged through Bicol, Manila, and the United States. Best known as the compassionate chronicler of the Filipino immigrant experience in the United States, he is the author of such novels as *The Volcano*, 1965, *Villa Magdalena*, 1965, and *The Praying Man*, 1982.

In the field of the novel, social realism has always been a major force. This was again evident in the 1950s. Against the background of chronic peasant and

workers' unrest and the post-World War II dilemmas of independence and nationhood, novelists like Lazaro Francisco, Amado V. Hernandez, and F. Sionil Jose, have grappled with the imperatives of defining society and clarifying its directions. A common problem that these writers have dealt with is endemic peasant unrest. This was dramatized in the immediate postwar years by the Huk movement, which was the peasant rebellion that grew out of the 1930s, expanded in the context of the anti-Japanese struggle, and then posed a serious challenge to the state after the war.

The panorama of 20th-century Philippine social history is dramatized in novels like Francisco's *Maganda Pa ang Daigdig* (The World Is Still Beautiful), 1955-1956, and *Daluyong* (Tidal Wave), 1962; Hernandez's *Mga Ibong Mandaragit* (Birds of Prey), 1969, and *Luha ng Buwaya* (Crocodile Tears), 1963; and Jose's Rosales Novels: *The Pretenders*, 1962, *Tree*, 1978, *My Brother, My Executioner*, 1979, *Mass*, 1983, and *Po-on*, 1984. While these novelists vary in the clarity of their social vision and the skill with which they make this vision manifest in literary form, they attest to how, since Rizal, social and political criticism has been a central principle in Philippine literature.

The Huk movement was crushed after the capture of members of the Communist Politburo in simultaneous raids in Manila in 1950. The seeming closure of this avenue of radical change, the disillusionment that followed the initial euphoria that attended the presidency of Ramon Magsaysay, and the realities of the Cold War fostered a sense of social pessimism among Filipino intellectuals. Such pessimism is revealed in works like Kerima Polotan-Tuvera's *The Hand of the Enemy*, 1962. Poverty and powerlessness, even if occasionally relieved by a bedrock faith in the dignity of the human person, characterize the social world portrayed in such novels as Andres Cristobal Cruz's *Ang Tundo Man May Langit Din* (Tondo Has a Heaven Too), 1959-1960, and Edgardo M. Reyes' *Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (In the Claws of Neon Lights), 1967-1968.

The mood of pessimism and drift, however, was replaced by an expansive sense of new political possibilities by the end of the 1960s. Today, the crisis in Philippine political life, fed by the new nationalism of the 1960s and the experience of the Martial-Law period, 1972-1981—has been both challenge and impetus to the novel. Works by Tagalog novelists like Efren Abueg, Edgardo M. Reyes, Rogelio Sicat, Dominador Mirasol, and Lualhati Bautista are particularly important.

The novel in the regional languages continues to flourish with the advent of new writers. At the same time, significant work in English continues to be written by Lina Espina-Moore, Linda Ty-Casper, perhaps the most prolific of the English novelists, and other writers. The spirit of experiment and innovation, fed by new literary influences, notably the example of Latin American writing, remains alive with writers like Alfred Yuson, Ninotchka Rosca, and Eric Gamalinda. At the same time, the political activism of recent decades continues to find expression

not only in overtly Marxist fiction, like Ruth Firmeza's *Gera*, 1991, but in the interest of writers in speaking to a popular audience, as in the *Rosas* project of "alternative romances," which counts such contributors as Lualhati Bautista, Joi Barrios, Rosalie Matilac, Leo del Rogierro, Crisostomo Papa, and Rosario Cruz-Lucero.

The work of writers over the past century will be groundwork and inspiration for writers to bring the Filipino novel to an even higher level of development in the decades to come.

Essay and Criticism

Conditions of literacy and liberalism nourished the development of the essay in the Philippines. Its 20th-century beginnings can be traced to the work in Spanish of such writers as Teodoro M. Kalaw, Manuel C. Briones, and Claro M. Recto; and in English by essayists like Maximo Kalaw, I.V. Mallari, Jorge Bocobo, Fernando Maramag, Ignacio Manlapaz, and Salvador Lopez, whose *Literature and Society* won the 1940 Commonwealth Literary Award for the Essay. In the Philippine languages, the essay also had its practitioners, although the form mostly came in the guise of the magazine article or the newspaper column, less collected reflection than spontaneous response to the stimuli of the day's events.

With the decline of Spanish, English became an important medium for the essay, particularly since this was, throughout much of the present century, the adopted language of Filipino intellectuals. The early published collections of essays included Zoilo M. Galang's *Life and Success*, 1921, the first book of essays in English; Vicente M. Hilario and Eliseo Quirino's *Thinking for Ourselves*, 1924; and Francisco B. Icasiano's *Horizons From My Nipa Hut*, 1941.

In the post-World War II period, the essay functioned as an important instrument of cultural and political education. Postwar essayists included Pura Santillan Castrence, E. Aguilar Cruz, Federico Mangahas, Maria Luna-Lopez, Leon Ma. Guerrero, Teodoro M. Locsin, Nick Joaquin (aka Quijano de Manila), Horacio de la Costa SJ, Alejandro Roces, Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, I.P. Soliongo, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, and Adrian Cristobal. Perhaps the most prominent of the contemporary essayists is Renato Constantino, intellectual heir to Claro M. Recto, whose work of social and political criticism—such as *The Filipinos in the Philippines*, 1966, *Dissent and Counter-Consciousness*, 1970, and *Neo-Colonial Identity and Counter-Consciousness*, 1978—has had far-reaching influence.

Younger essayists, usually writing as newspaper columnists, such as Alfred Yuson, Sylvia Mayuga, Conrado de Quiros, Edilberto N. Alegre, Constantino Tejero, Jo-Ann Maglipon, Barbara Gonzalez, and Ambeth Ocampo, have also added their own distinctive voices, writing on diverse topics in a varied register of styles.

A survey of Philippine literature would not be complete without mention made of supportive institutions and practices. These include publishing, education, and

criticism.

Throughout the present century, journalism has been an important partner to literature. Book publishing in the country remains inadequately developed, with current print runs averaging only a thousand copies. While there have been attempts to upgrade the industry, such literary book-publishing projects as the Philippine Book Guild, 1936, and Barangay Writers' Project, 1946, have met with only limited success. Hence, the pages of popular newspapers and magazines have been the main vehicle for poetry and fiction.

From early newspapers like the Tagalog *Muling Pagsilang*, 1901, and Cebuano *Ang Suga*, 1901, to the highly successful chain of Liwayway Publications, which came out with the Tagalog *Liwayway*, 1922, Cebuano *Bisaya*, 1930, Ilocano *Bannawag*, 1934, and *Hiligaynon*, 1934, to the English-language magazines like *Philippine Magazine* and *Philippines Free Press*, and campus publications like *Literary Apprentice*, periodicals have spurred literary production.

The Liwayway publications, founded in 1922 by Ramon Roces, are of particular importance. The most successful publishing venture in Philippine journalism, the four publications of the chain, led by *Liwayway*, had a combined weekly circulation of 137,458 in 1937. In comparison, the English-language *Philippines Free Press* had a weekly circulation of 20,200 and *Philippine Magazine* a monthly circulation of 10,000. Apart from their size, the Liwayway publications fostered cross-regional literary exchange by translating texts, usually Tagalog, for common publication in sister magazines in the regional languages. Hence, authors like Lazaro Francisco and Fausto Galauran were read across language boundaries. The primacy of the publication chain was such that it exercised great influence in the setting of literary standards. As this was a mass-market chain, it was often criticized, as in the Panitikan revolt of 1935, for "low artistic standards." There is no doubt, however, that popular magazines like the Liwayway publications have played a key role in cultivating a popular appetite for literature and in shaping popular sensibilities.

In contrast, the smaller and more select audience of the English periodicals made for a situation more hospitable to experiment and innovation. This was particularly true of the campus literary magazines, like *Literary Apprentice* (University of the Philippines), *Dawn* (University of the East), and *Heights* (Ateneo de Manila). While the elitism of the English language periodicals also occasioned a disengagement from popular realities, these publications provided ground for the development of ideas and skills that had an impact on popular literature, as seen in the rise of modernismo in the 1960s.

Today, there has been an expansion in literary publishing. In addition to commercial magazines and campus publications, there are journals and books issued by such institutions as the Cultural Center of the Philippines, which publishes the journal *Ani*; writers' organizations like the Unyon ng mga

Manunulat sa Pilipinas (UMPIL) and Galian sa Arte at Tula (GAT); and publishing houses like Solidaridad, Anvil, New Day Publishers, Babaylan Publishing Collective, and Kalikasan. Much more work, however, remains to be done to broaden the circulation of Filipino literary works.

The plural, multilingual character of Philippine literature has been both strength and weakness. It makes for richness and variety. On the other hand, it problematizes the concept of “national” literature. While patterns of shared experience cut across regions, there is not as much interregional and interlinguistic exchange as there should be in the literary field, despite the example of the Liwayway publications. There is, at the same time, a divide between English writing and writing in the “vernaculars,” often expressed as a distinction between “high” (for English) and “low” (for vernacular). What is forfeited, for this reason, is the formation of a broad base of shared critical and creative experiences in the development of national literature.

Since the 1960s, however, writers and scholars have begun to address the problem, in part because of the “new nationalism” and populist mood of the 1960s. Initiatives have included the more active advocacy of the national language; the promotion of interest in folk, popular, and mass culture, including the interest in so-called “regional literatures”; and various efforts by groups and institutions like the Cultural Center of the Philippines in fostering publishing, translation, literary research, and cross-regional exchange.

The problem of the national language has been a major issue in Philippine literary history since 1935 when the Philippine Constitution provided for “the development and adoption of a language common to all people on the basis of the existing native languages” (Gonzalez 1980:51). In 1937 President Manuel Quezon proclaimed “the national language based on the Tagalog dialect as the national language of the Philippines.” However, inconsistent state policies, the failure to commit massive resources for systematic language promotion, and the opposition of English and non-Tagalog speakers have slowed down the development of the national language. The contested definition of the national language is shown in how the law has changed its name from “Tagalog” in 1937, to “Pilipino” in 1959, and to “Filipino” in 1973.

Despite all these, however, Tagalog/Pilipino/Filipino has spread throughout the country because of state promotion, particularly through the school system and, more important, because Tagalog is the language of the country’s primate region and seat of government. It is also the language of economic activity and of the educational and mass media facilities. Non-state channels, particularly cinema, television, and radio, have spurred the spread of a Tagalog-based language to which the name “Filipino” has been given. Linguist Andrew Gonzalez says of this lingua franca: “It is expected to be spread for practical purposes over the entire archipelago... among 97.1 percent of the population by the end of the century” (1980:149).

What the shape of the language for literary purposes will be like is not as easily predictable. What is clear is that writers inhabit a complex and changing language environment. For writers, this is a challenge above all else. They are, in a very real sense, engaged in the creation of language.

As much a part as publishing and language policy in the formation of a national literature is literary criticism. Throughout the present century, various ideas and theories of literary practice have been propagated. Informal channels include writers' organizations in which experiences are shared or advocacies proclaimed, the editorial policies of magazines setting norms of what is "publishable," and the system of literary awards, which holds up models of "excellence."

The present century has seen numerous writers' organizations. Among the most prominent are Aklatang Bayan, 1911; Ilaw at Panitik, 1922; UP Writers' Club, 1927; Panitikan, 1935, Philippine Writers' League, 1939; Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan (PAKSA), 1971; Unyon ng mga Manunulat ng Pilipinas (UMPIL), 1975; TELON Playrights' Circle, 1983; Pambansang Unyon ng mga Manunulat ng Pilipinas (PANULAT), 1986; Galian ng Arte at Tula (GAT), 1973; Katha, 1988; and Linangan ng Arte at Retorika (LIRA), 1987. Writers' groups have also flourished in places outside Manila. The largest of the regional organizations of writers are the Cebuano Lubas sa Dagang Bisaya or LUDABI, 1956; the Ilocano Gunglo Dagiti Mannurat nga Ilokano or GUMIL, 1923; and the Ilongo Sumakwelán of Vernacular Writers in Western Visayas, 1948.

The prestigious literary awards in the country include the Premio Zobel established in 1922, Commonwealth Literary Awards in 1940, Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards in 1950, Republic Cultural Heritage Awards in 1960, National Artist Awards in 1973, Philippine National Book Awards in 1981, both the Gawad Balagtas in 1963 and Gawad Collantes in 1967 of the Surian ng Wikang Pambansa, and the periodic prizes given by the major magazines that publish literary works.

In the beginning of the century, formal literary criticism in the country was largely practiced by writers themselves, who wrote literary chronicles, writing manuals, prefaces, and reviews in popular magazines. The interest in literary scholarship expressed the nationalist sentiments of the time. It was impelled by the need to affirm the value of Filipino cultural traditions, in reaction to Spanish disparagement of these traditions in centuries past and in the face of accelerating Westernization under US colonial rule.

Writers like Epifanio de los Santos, Julian Cruz Balmaseda, and Rufino Alejandro wrote literary chronicles. Lope K. Santos, Iñigo Ed. Regalado, Jose Villa Panganiban, and Clodualdo del Mundo discussed the nature of literature, its making and function in society. These authors drew critical standards from native sources as well as from Spanish literature, such as in the rules of European rhetoric and the convention of

Spanish metrics. They stressed, on one hand, the moral and formative function of art, its universality, the delight and “sweetness” it affords, and its truth in “reflecting” life. On the other hand, they were sensitive to the historical moment: to the role of writers in raising in their readers a sense of nationality and awareness of the problems in the society they inhabit.

The advent of English writing, and of writers educated in the American school system, introduced new values. In the 1930s, writers like Alejandro Abadilla advocated an “expressive” theory of writing, shifting the axis away from tradition and the conventions of an idealized community toward the “free” creativity of the individual artist. On the other hand, writers like Salvador P. Lopez, learning from American and Russian “proletarian” writers, spoke in behalf of socialist realism and the need for the writer’s integration into a collective struggle for a more egalitarian society.

The drama of the 1930s was played out again in the 1960s. The post-World War II period had seen the ascendancy, particularly in the universities, of American New Criticism, which saw the literary text as an autonomous verbal construct and an ensemble of devices largely divorced from biographical and historical contexts. Writers in English, many of whom trained in the United States, like Miguel Bernad SJ, Ricaredo Demetillo, Edilberto and Edith Tiempo, Epifanio San Juan Jr., and Gemino Abad, were influential critics, particularly from their base in the universities. In the 1960s, formalism, combined with the ideas of symbolist and expressionist writers in Europe, inspired new theories in the literary practice of Tagalog writers. The foremost theoretician to emerge from this group was Virgilio Almario.

By the late 1960s, however, the radicalization of Filipino intellectual life led to the resurgence of Marxism. Critics like Almario, Epifanio San Juan Jr., Bienvenido Lumbera, Nicanor Tiongson, Lucila Hosillos, Gelacio Guillermo, Edel Garcellano, and Elmer Ordoñez wrote on the need to see literature in the context of dynamic processes of historical transformation. This spurred interest in the study of popular and regional culture. Scholars like Lumbera, Tiongson, Doreen Fernandez, Resil Mojares, Edna Z. Manlapaz, Lilia Realubit, and others wrote on popular and regional literary traditions, expanding on work earlier done by scholars like Leopoldo Yabes, Marcelino Foronda Jr., Buenaventura Medina Jr., E. Arsenio Manuel, and Damiana Eugenio. Vivencio Jose, Florentino Hornedo, Nagasura Madale, Juan Francisco, and other scholars also enlarged the understanding of Philippine folk traditions.

The past three decades have witnessed a marked expansion of literary scholarship. There has been an increase in research output as well as a refinement of perspectives and methods. Much translation work is being done across Philippine languages as well as from and to foreign languages. As scholars have become alive to the “recovery” of native and popular traditions, they have as well remained open to new critical theories from the West. Literary studies have expanded into “cultural studies,” encompassing forms and problems that were not adequately

dealt with by the older critics, and have been invigorated by works in other disciplines, as in the contributions of historian Reynaldo Ileto and Vicente Rafael. The community of scholars is large and includes such critics as Isagani R. Cruz, Soledad Reyes, Ma. Luisa Torres-Reyes, and Ruth Elynia Mabanglo.

Philippine literary studies have illumined the body of works that constitute our literary traditions, and have enriched the ways we see and use these traditions.

Conclusion

To study Philippine literature is to map a rich and complex field of experience. The plurality of languages and ethnic backgrounds, the experience of three colonialisms, and the continuing struggle for social justice and nationhood have fostered a rich “national literature” that, even today, continues to be shaped in dynamic ways. • R. Mojares

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