

Thank you very much, Paul, Vince, for the kind words.

I'm truly privileged and humbled to be a recipient of this year's Grant Goodman Prize, for which I am grateful to the Philippine Studies Group for your vote of confidence. This is an unexpected honor, all the more so because I think of myself more as a student of history than as a bona fide historian.

I got interested in Philippine history because I was interested in Philippine literature. From the beginning, I realized that to better understand a literary work, one had to attend closely not only to the workings of the text, but to its materiality and historicity as an artefact and as a dynamic process of language-use, meaning-making, and intervention in the world. Text and so-called context are so mutually implicated in each other that it makes no sense to speak of the "background" of a literary work. Rather, one needs to think about words and texts in motion, of literature as an ineluctably temporal and for that reason historical phenomenon of world-making.

Philippine literature and history have not always been separate disciplines, nor were they separate from other fields of inquiry. The members of the Propaganda Movement dabbled freely in pursuits ranging from writing novels and essays to collecting insects and folklore to archival research to fencing to obtaining membership in learned societies.

Recall, too, that Teodoro Agoncillo first gained public recognition as a prize-winning Tagalog poet and short story writer. While he was careful to distinguish the historical and literary imaginations, history and literature tended to bleed into each other in his most influential work, *The Revolt of the Masses* (Aguilar 2020, 145). Critics have a point in arguing that Agoncillo's literary blandishments (ibid., 176) sometimes compromised the historical accuracy of *Revolt*. More significantly, his character studies of Bonifacio and the masses left a lot to be desired.

But it is telling that two of the most penetrating critiques of Agoncillo, by Neferti Tadiar (2004) and Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr. (2020), were written by scholars who were trained, in Neferti's case, as a literary critic and, in Jun's case, as a management engineer and sociologist.

Students of literature concern themselves with looking closely at the ways in which storytelling highlights or suppresses the very presuppositions that shape it and the ways in which narratives appeal to their readers as plausible representations of reality. These concerns, too, are shared by historians as they deal with the challenges of using archival and other materials and their crafting of their own historical narratives and studies (see White 1978, 58).

Whatever the methodological and theoretical differences between literature and history—in part a consequence of their institutionalization and professionalization as distinct fields—they have in common a keen awareness of the imperatives, the political, intellectual, and artistic stakes, and also the pitfalls and potentials, of interpretation.

I continue to draw inspiration from Resil Mojares, a recipient of the Grant Goodman prize, who started his career as a fictionist, and who has characterized his method of doing research that freely ranges across the disciplines of politics, history, literature, anthropology, and cultural studies as a form of “border raiding” (Mojares 2017, 1). In fact, a quick look at the work of previous recipients of this prize shows that this has indeed been more the rule than the exception. These days, though, I must say that I enjoy reading works of history, and also physics, far more than works of literary, cultural, and art theory and criticism.

We live in a time of intellectual and political ferment. Philippine Studies has expanded its scope and concerns beyond the ambits of methodological nationalism and US-Philippines bilateralism, even as scholars are now better armed to range across local, sub-regional, national, regional, transregional, and global scales of analysis. The imperative to go beyond academia and

engage with Filipinos and other peoples remains. Border-raiding involves not only crossing disciplinary or area boundaries, but many other boundaries as well, not least social, imaginative, and political.

May we continue to learn from each other and from our other colleagues in Asian Studies and, just as important, beyond. Let us engage in the venerable art of border-raiding together.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay tayong lahat!

#### Works Cited

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