

# Introduction

## The Turns and Returns of Literary Studies

In recent years, there has been a return of and to Literary Studies in the academy, after what is characterized as its eclipse, since the 1970s, by the theoretical turn across the human sciences and by Cultural Studies in the literary humanities. Scholars and critics of verbal art are revisiting and revaluing their field's characteristic method of close reading, and there has been a revival of older methods of literary study, seen in strenuous calls for a "New Philology" or a philological turn in the field, which is to say a return and renewal of the historical and linguistic study of texts, more generally (Wakefield 2016; Herrnstein-Smith 2016; Ferguson 2013; Eagleton 2007; Barlow 2007).

For this special issue of *TCR*, we sought submissions that respond to these turns and returns of Literary Studies, whether they concern the critique of Philippine/regional literary texts and traditions, in particular; or theoretical disquisitions on disciplinary and interdisciplinary methods, creative and critical writing, aesthetics, and the question of language, in general. We expressed special interest in work, within these shifting institutional and intellectual contexts, that considers the emergent category of "region" in Philippine literary and cultural study, especially studies that attempt to be comparative, or that explore what the Cordilleras or similar "regions" might have in common with other language and culture areas of the Philippines in terms of artistic and critical formations; and in work that foregrounds linguistic questions (including translation practices) in the constellation and critique of local literary arts.

This editorial essay contextualizes our featured contributions for this issue within the turns and returns of Literary Studies in the Philippine and international academy and, in so doing, reprises the basic categorical and methodological questions driving the revival and ongoing renaissance of Literary Studies in this country and elsewhere. Such questions involve *region* as an emergent category of Philippine literary history and canon critique; a reevaluation of the *Linguistic Turn* itself across the human sciences (mainly humanities and social science disciplines) and how this paradigm shift served to enhance and expand, rather than eclipse, the discipline's established methods and objects of analyses, with some coverage of the recent efflorescence of philology (old and new) in the field; and a critical review of the discipline's characteristic method of close reading.

## Region

Anvil's publication of *Filipinos Writing: Philippine Literature from the Regions* at the millennial turn (Lumbera 2001) decisively announced the emergence of *region* (and academically legitimized it) as a new and principal category of Philippine literary historiography and critical studies. This volume now constitutes a sequel and companion text to the classic and widely-used 1982 *Philippine Literature: A History and Anthology* (Lumbera and Nograles-Lumbera 2005), whose conceptualizations and survey of Philippine literatures were otherwise and more traditionally organized through a periodizing hypothesis and argument that roughly hewed to the standard and broadly delineated eras of modern and nationalist Philippine historiography: Oral Lore from Pre-Colonial Times (- 1565); Literature under Spanish Colonialism (1565-1897); Literature under U.S. Colonialism (1898-1945); and Literature under the Republic (1946-1985)—brought up to date, in later editions, with a section on Literature after EDSA (1986-1995).<sup>1</sup> One need not dwell here on the undisputed power of textbook wisdom to enshrine certain works and traditions (here, what is made to count as “Philippine literature/s”) and the axiological or value-making and -adding presuppositions underwriting any and all frequently unproblematic canon-building projects (see Hernstein-Smith 1983, 3 and 5-10; Campomanes 2009; Lazarus et al. 2015).

In *Filipinos Writing* (2001), general editor and the Philippines' leading Literary Studies scholar Bienvenido Lumbera presupposes (but does not explain or elaborate) *region* as the organizing principle for reconceptualizing and presumably pluralizing the canon of Philippine literature/s, with the result that its classifications of the country's literary traditions, predicated on inexplicably shifting criteria or their combinations of ethnolinguistic group or regional language (some of which are otherwise *transregional*, even *translocal*, in scope and distribution), administrative or cultural geography, and historically major or minor status, are presented as self-evident givens: Northern Luzon Literature, Pangasinan Literature, Bicol Literature, Mindanao Literature, Western Visayas Literature, National Capital Region Literature, Central and Southern Tagalog Literature, Eastern Visayas Literature, Central Visayas Literature, Pampanga Literature, and Cordillera Literature.<sup>2</sup>

A monographic study of “West Visayas Literature” by the poet and Cultural Studies scholar Isidoro Cruz (2009) has the distinction of initiating some sustained theoretical reflection on region in recent Philippine literary and critical studies. Citing Michel Foucault's thinking on region as a category, Cruz points out that “etymologically, *region*, from *regere*, to command....is a geographical term, a fiscal, administrative, military notion....designating a form of domination’

(14).” Relatedly, for Cruz, region has generally functioned in the Philippines as “a political classification,” a way of subdividing and clustering the country's provinces on a geographical and administrative basis, at least since the 1978 Election Code which mandated this gridding of such provinces into thirteen (13) regions in the additional terms of “common culture and ethnicity,” with the proviso in the 1987 Constitution that, excepting autonomous Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras, they “do not constitute “subnational governments” (14-15).

Cruz, for his own purposes, understands “the term *region*, as in the phrase ‘regional literature’....in its other, cultural sense: a region as an ethnic community constituent of the larger community, the nation,” elaborating a theoretically embryonic point made by Resil Mojares about “*region* and *nation* [as] interacting, mutually constitutive realities:”

They conjure each other and are caught up in a process in which their values are not fixed. Nation and region (even the *ethnic* itself) are historical artifacts. They involve boundaries...which are not immutable...but dynamic because socially and historically created. They involve as well relations of identity and power which either pull them together or pull them apart. (Mojares 1990, qtd. in Cruz 2009, 15; all emphases supplied)

What surfaces from the interventions of Cruz and Mojares here is that the notion of the nation (now decoupled from the postcolonial State), and upon which region is predicated in a Philippine discursive context, itself needs to be reconceptualized or reimaged (on the specific case of Cebuano Literature in this regard, see Estillo-Gabunada 2019/2020).

A roundtable presentation I made at a national conference of the UMPIL [*Unyon ng Mga Manunulat ng Pilipinas*], “Ang Kategoriya ng Rehiyon sa Kritikal na Tradisyon sa Filipinas,” proved enabling for the sorts of research and critical questions that I was to foreground, subsequently, in developing the possible foci for this special issue of the journal. Broached in the form of several questions and some possible answers to them, my presentation had asked the conference (and fellow roundtable) participants to rethink the interrelated categories of nation and region in mapping and making sense of Philippine creative and critical traditions in all their heterogeneity and possible forms of commonality, and proposed, for their consideration, a loosely global or diasporic sense to nation [*Ka-Pilipinuhan*] and a deliberately flexible and more localizing sense to region [*pook*]:

Pangunahin para sa akin ang nasyon ng nasyon, ang ideya ng bayan/pamayanan, ang ‘Filipinas’—ano ang nasasakop o sinasaklaw ng bansang ito? Ito ba ang buong teritoryong nama-

na mula sa mga kolonisador, gamit ang mga mapang bunga ng kanilang mga pangangailangang administratibo sa panahon ng pananakop at paggapi sa ating mga ninuno? Pangalawa para sa akin ay ang kategoriya ng 'Rehiyon' bilang pagbabalangkas ng iba't ibang pangkatin- o komunidad-pangkalinangan sa bansa, batay sa heograpiya, at mga wikang nagbubuklod-buklod sa kanila. Sapat bang wika/kultura at heograpiya (*speech community; cultural geography*) ang itatanghal na pamantayan sa pagkilala ng mga 'rehiyong' ito, samakatuwid naaayon sa antropolohikal at linggwistikong nosyon ng "*ethnolinguistic group*"?

Imbes na 'Filipinas,' aking ipapanukala na maaaring malimi, at mabigyan ng alternatibong pang-unawa, ang sakop at saklaw ng bansa/bayan o pamayanan sa terminong 'Ka-Pilipinuhan.' At dulot na rin ng ganitong lapit sa masasabing bagong heograpiya ng 'Filipinas' bilang 'Ka-Pilipinuhan,' ipinapanukala ko rin na baka mas angkop at akma ang 'Pook' (*locale; the local*) kaysa 'Reyihon' upang makalikha ng alternatibong pagbabalangkas ng mga pangkatin o komunidad na kasama sa, o maaaring maibilang na bahagi ng, 'Ka-Pilipinuhan.' Ang ganitong alternatibong pagtingin sa Filipinas at Rehiyon ay maiuugat o maaaring mai-angkla sa isang mahalagang yugto sa kasaysayan ng nasyonalismong Filipino: ang yugtong ito ay sabayang kontemporaryo at istorikal, at kaakibat nito ang isang pinomenang pulitiko-ekonomikal (*political economic phenomenon*) na may bumubuntot na turnuhang paradigmatico (*paradigmatic turn*), at aking binigyang-tanda sa isang sanaysay tungkol sa pagbubuo ng *Filipino American Literature* bilang isang tradisyon ng Ka-Pilipinuhan...hindi lamang ng....bansang Estados Unidos. (Campomanes 2014)

This editor looks forward to a further and more vigorous thinking about the motility (as well as limitations) of region as a concept in new studies of Filipino creative texts and traditions being envisioned or undertaken by a new generation of critics and scholars (which include in their ranks two of our authors published in this number, Maria Karaan and Christian Benitez).

### The Linguistic (and Neo-Philological) Turn

The turn to theory and language/discourse analyses (following the so-called *Linguistic Turn*) since at least the 1970s has, in a fair re-assessment, served to expand, rather than eclipse, the real business of literary criticism: the study and criticism of literary texts and traditions. Language, after all, is both the raw matter and medium of the verbal arts. And indeed, in a sobering reconsideration of his previously trenchant critiques of this turn, Terry Eagleton, one of the discipline's leading scholars, affirms that "literary theorists may plead not guilty to the charge of having sabotaged literary criticism" with it (2007, 8). In what follows, I refrain from rehearsing the semiotic theory

of language as "a system of signs," and the advancements in our understanding of signification (over reference) as the basic work of language, as well as the atomic or structural unit of the verbal sign that underpin it, and which sum up the major contributions of this turn, presuming readers' basic familiarity with all of them.<sup>3</sup> I dwell, instead, on some general points or questions that pertain to the consequential transformations and enhancements of literary studies, globally, in terms of this field's critical objects and methods.

The Linguistic Turn is attributed to the radical impact of *Course in General Linguistics* (hereafter *CGL*, 2011 edition; 1916) by the major theorist of structuralist linguistics Ferdinand de Saussure (sometimes also celebrated as the founder of modern linguistics in general). This turn, alternatively called "The Linguistic Model" or "The Language Analogy" (Jameson 1972, 3-39), in its influential sweep across nearly all the major human sciences since the Wade Baskin English translation of *CGL* in the 1950s, entailed significant epistemological reversals, not only in the discipline of linguistics, where it originated but also, beyond it, in neighboring disciplines such as literary study, anthropology and sociology, historiography, philosophy, media and communication studies, the history of science, psychology, and belatedly, political science.<sup>4</sup> Why is it called the Linguistic Turn? In graduate courses in late-modern literary and critical theory at my home institution, I explain usage of the term *turn*, in this context, in two distinct senses, the first of which is equivalent to "paradigmatic," to borrow from the philosopher and historian of science Thomas Kuhn's notion of "paradigm/shifts," that is, in terms of the primary denotative meaning of turn as "revolution/ary" (2012 [1962]); and the second is a literal one: when attention is *turned* away (or *changed*) from something *to* another, in this case, a generalized turn to language as the privileged or focal object of contemplation and study across the abovementioned human science disciplines.

Essentially, Saussure, with *CGL*, was the first to systematically recognize and explicate what Julia Kristeva calls "the problem of language in its generality," to argue convincingly for the world-constituting, not just the world-disclosing, powers of language (Kristeva 1989, 5). Language now ceased to be a mere means or medium of human communication and expression, and is understood to provide the very basis for human subjectivity, our sense of community and notions of reality, and thought processes (*ibid.*, 6-8). Regarding, in the late 1980s, the widespread intellectual ferment that Saussurean structuralism had unleashed since *CGL*'s publication, Kristeva makes us appreciate how this theoretical turn (with language as the central problematic), which was sweeping through many areas of knowledge production, did constitute an epistemological revolution in terms of

its transdisciplinary effects, and the institutional transformations it wrought in its wake:

The conception of language as the “key” to man and to social history and as the means of access to the laws of societal functioning constitutes perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of our era....Today, more than even before in history, language is set apart, isolated, as it were. It is grasped as a particular *object of knowledge*, and considered capable of introducing us not only to the laws of its own functioning but also to all that concerns the social realm. (ibid., 3; emphasis supplied)

The best way to revalue *CGL*, in my opinion (and after Kristeva), is to follow Saussure in some of the basic maneuvers and operations he performed as a 19th century man of science who was seeking, in his University of Geneva lectures, to professionalize or modernize Linguistics, to make a science out of it. As a scientist, Saussure believed that the founding objective of the new science should be “to seek out the nature of its object of study [as] obviously without this elementary step, no science can develop a method” (2011 [1916; 1959], 3). As he poses one of his founding questions, “What is the both the integral and concrete object of linguistics?” (ibid., 7). Indeed, the Marxist scholar Fredric Jameson observes, in his now classic critique of structuralist linguistics, that “Saussure’s dissatisfaction with the older linguistics was in its very essence a methodological, a terminological one,” quoting Saussure himself who had complained in another work about “the utter ineptness of current terminology” in his discipline, and had emphatically expressed “the need for reform” in it, and “to show what kind of an object language is in general....” (Jameson 1972, 11 and 13).

Lamenting the predominance of Historical Linguistics (which was a subfield and subject in which he himself excelled) in his time, Saussure, as we know, critiqued the ancient Greek grammarians and modern French neo-grammarians for their “normative” approach to linguistic phenomena, concerned merely with “correct norms” of language use; the classical philologists for their “slavish attention to written texts, to the neglect of the living language;” and the comparative philologists, who succeeded the latter, for their “naturalist” approach to language development, with their method exclusively “comparative” only, lacking in a “historical” or historicizing aspect (2011 [1916; 1959], 1-5). All these forbears, for Saussure, were unable to focus on the real object of study which is, of course, what Kristeva termed “the problem of language in its generality,” that is to say, the nature/structure of Language itself.

Saussure turned to the work of the Yale scholar Dwight Whitney (who was engaged in the study of language as a “social institution”), and of a new German school of neo-grammarians, for a measure of

relief and as a fount of inspiration for his developing project of a “linguistics of language.” As Saussure acknowledges: “Thanks to them, language is no longer looked upon as an organism that develops independently [this is what he means by “naturalist,” in his critique of comparative philology] but as a product of the collective mind of linguistic groups” or speech communities (ibid., 5).

In “The Scope of Linguistics” as he was envisioning it in the Geneva lectures, it was really with objectives “b” [‘to determine the forces that are permanently and universally at work in all languages...’] and “c” [‘to delimit and define’ its object of study] that Saussure was centrally concerned, as objective “a” [‘to describe and trace the history of all languages...’ or in a word, the work of Historical Linguistics] was already something that he was moving away from, so as to be able to identify and refine ‘the integral and concrete object [of study]’ for his tribe of linguists (ibid., 6). As the critical Saussurean Emile Benveniste affirmed:

We are always inclined to that naïve concept of a primordial period in which a complete man discovered another one, equally complete, and between the two of them, language was worked out little by little. This is pure fiction. We can never get back to man separated from language....It is a speaking man whom we find in the world, a man speaking to another man, and language provides the very definition of man. (Benveniste, 1971 [1966], 224)

For Benveniste, as for Saussure, objective “a” [‘to describe and trace the history of all languages...’] is ultimately a gesture in futility, a thankless and unrewarding pursuit, on this account.

In delimiting and defining the field to get to this central object for study and have it stand or “set apart” (in Kristeva’s terms), Saussure performed two major operations: separating what he, in the original French, termed *la langue* [language] from *le langage* [speech, or more broadly, ‘all manner of human expression’]; and separating the former, as well, from *actes de parole* [‘individual acts of speaking’], what he more generally described as “separating language from speaking” (ibid., 14), and therefore from both speech in general, and the speaking subject in particular. (In another instance, he described language as “speech less speaking;” ibid., 77).

After discovering “the social bond that constitutes language” and, thus, that “Language is not complete in any speaker; it exists perfectly only within a collectivity,” Saussure determined, axiomatically, that “Language is not a function of the speaker,” with the unstated but disturbing corollary that, on the contrary, the speaker is a function in/of language (ibid., 13-14). It was an implicit corollary upon which Benveniste would predicate his articulations of his own problems with Saussure’s general linguistics—or linguistics of language—an ap-

proach which he otherwise ratifies while questioning some of its contradictory or conceptually incomplete aspects. As Kristeva helpfully explicates, “detach[ing] the speaking subject (man) from what constituted him (language)...was a moment fraught with consequences, of which the first was that it no longer allowed man to think of himself as a sovereign entity” ([1989, 4]—here man is no longer sovereign over language but the opposite; language is not a function of the speaker, something which the speaker uses, or makes function, for his or her own purposes).

Apparently, the most unsettling for Benveniste was the consequent implication, in this heuristic maneuver here by Saussure, that the speaking subject is not integral to linguistic structure, esp. the latter’s assertion that, in separating language from speaking (for language to stand apart as the object of structuralist linguistics), one is “separating the social from the individual,” and what is “essential” from what is “accidental” or “accessorial” (Saussure 2011 [1916; 1959], 14).<sup>5</sup> This problematic formulation was what prompted Benveniste, in response, to pursue or develop his research on “Subjectivity in Language” and “The Nature of Pronouns,” i.e. his contrary finding that any language is subjectively structured, at base, even as it constitutes our subjectivity (see Benveniste 1971 [1966], 217-230, for this now equally paradigmatic work on what he called ‘the linguistic status of person’).

All told, and based on this redacted account alone, the Linguistic Turn has not so much eclipsed as expanded and enhanced the scope, methods, and objects of literary study. It has even allowed us to recognize, no matter how belatedly, that many of the canonical modern critics (e.g. Mikhail Bakhtin, F.R. Leavis, Eric Auerbach, Walter Benjamin, William Empson, I.A. Richards, etc.) were already paying close attention to language as matter and medium of the literary arts in their own times, enabling them not only to fashion exquisitely fine-grained interpretations of literary texts (in terms of form and genre) but also to stage subtle and supple critiques of their own historical, sociopolitical, and cultural contexts. In Terry Eagleton’s own recognition of this neglected aspect of their field-fallowing and -defining oeuvre,

As *philologists* or ‘lovers of language’, their passion for literature was bound up with an engagement with entire civilisations. What else is language but the bridge which links the two? Language is the medium in which both Culture and culture – literary art and human society – come to consciousness; and literary criticism is thus a sensitivity to the thickness and intricacy of the medium which makes us what we are. (2007, 8; emphasis supplied)

In like manner, this turn has also worked to sharpen and strengthen our received understandings of the world-making and subject-con-

stituting powers of language (and its use) *in* literature, beyond the imaginative and innovative constructions of, say, literary subjectivity (through the narrator in fiction or the persona in poetry, for examples), with the Author and the Reader themselves soon being theorized as “subject-positions” and “subject-effects.” Few people could dispute the virtues of regarding the Author as a “function” in or of discourse /s (Foucault 1998 [1969]) and the Reader as a “field” and compositional principle (Barthes 1977) in interpretations of verbal art, after this expansion of the hermeneutic circle beyond the previously hermetic cincture of the text drawn by formalist, specifically New-Critical, approaches.

At its tail-end, and this is a segue from it that makes perfect sense, the Linguistic Turn acquired other and new half-lives. Between the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century, the literary critic and scholar Frances Ferguson had “noticed a steady drumbeat in literary studies: a call for a return to philology” reverberating from the corner of medieavalists and literary comparatists. Most notably, Paul de Man and Edward Said were making the case for a philological turn in the field even as “neither gave evidence of actual philological expertise,” in the keen observation of another critic who was cataloguing multiple instances of this emerging trend (qtd. in Ferguson 2013, 323). This neo-philological turn and technique could be seen, according to Ferguson, in the curious forms it was taking, given “how far de Man’s notion of philology is from anything that a classically trained philologist would recognize.” Indeed,

Said seems not so much to practice philological criticism as to recognize what’s involved in it when he talks about the importance of knowing how texts are made, and de Man’s critical views stress the importance of readings in a way that could be seen as an occasion and motive for philological work rather than anything that resembles philology as it has regularly been practiced....Even as de Man and Said were calling for a return to philology, that is, they were themselves practicing a form of philology that was itself novel in that it did not particularly concern itself with the notion that one of philology’s chief tasks was to establish the very texts that it interpreted, and to construct them from fragments. (*ibid.*)

This drove Ferguson to investigate further these revitalizations and revisions of philological techniques and methods that were coming to the fore. In brief, and drawing from Jacques Rancière’s *Mute Speech* (2011) and its theoretical notions of “style” in literary modernity, she determined that literature could be reconceived as “a kind of fossil that needed both acknowledgment of its silence and interpretation of it.” In this case, Author and Reader are now not the only ones being theorized as figures and functions in or of literary discourse but the

Critic as well, and the crucial role of mediation and expertly interpretation that he or she performs in respect of the “silent” Text. In an analytical *tour de force*, in fact, Ferguson proceeds to demonstrate how the contemporary novel “has more recently absorbed the philological and hermeneutic project into itself even as criticism has, in the name of philology, seen itself as countering a hermeneutic approach” (ibid., 325).

### Close Reading (and Anglo-American New Criticism)

Literary study, defined in terms of *close reading* as its core method, never departed from the Philippine academic scene and the latter may be regarded as not having had to return to it; on the contrary, it is here where this kind of literary study, in short order to be construed as “traditional” by the theoretical turn, flourished and persisted since the 1950s: a function of continuing Philippine neocolonial ties to the United States. As a theory of literary production, as pedagogical practice, and as a theory of literary criticism in the Philippine classroom or the regulatory and governing interpretive wisdom on the pages of the Philippine learned journal, Anglo-American New Criticism, to which we owe the technique of close reading, has been undisputed as, and remains, the hegemonic commonsense. This has been the case since local writers (most prominently the Tiempos, Edith and Edilberto) returned from their apprenticeship in the highest academies of the American empire in successive batches, armed with its doctrinal tenets and driven by the compulsion to socialize so many new Filipino initiates into (what proved to be) its seductive and asphyxiating embrace.<sup>6</sup>

What exactly was new about the New Criticism then, which, at the point that Filipino writers were being fatally drawn to it as a consequence of their American sojourns as apprentices, was already being declared, after its heydays between the late 1920s and 1940s (and perhaps precipitately), to be outmoded? Criticism before it in the Anglo-American academy was, as we know, impressionistic, lacked a distinct method, and relied too heavily on authorial biography, contextualism, philology (the historical study of texts) or literary history, and moralism, paying attention to such things and not “the text itself” and “the text in itself.”<sup>7</sup> Whatever it was that struck everybody as novel and modern about it, as an epochal break from traditional and therefore flaccid practices and precepts of the kinds I have described, this much is certain: it was a tremendously transformational theory. First, it developed a disciplinarily distinct method; second, it canonized certain writers, styles, and genres so persuasively we continue to consider them classics and axiomatic choices even to date; and as a consequence of both, it professionalized and modernized literary study.

It is no exaggeration to say, for example, that it is to the New Critics (some of whom were also called Southern Agrarians, because

of their association with the Agrarian revival in the southern USA and its politics of anti-modernity and critique of the industrializing ethos) that we owe the canonization of Poetry as the highest, purest, and most perfect form of verbal art. The “poetic” became synonymous with “literary;” the poem became the ur-text, and any aesthetic or compositional theory in the literary arts entire, even in prose, became known as “poetics.” With I.A. Richards, T.S. Eliot, Archibald MacLeish and R.P. Blackmur as doctrinal foils and forbears, the New Critics, for example, found the purchase and authorization to install the work of the Metaphysical poets like John Donne, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell, over that of the Romantics, as the most exemplary texts, and revered touchstones, of modern poetry or, yes, *literature*. With “close reading,” a technique or method of literary interpretation which is the signature invention of the New Critics as already stated, in which the ‘poem’ or the literary text is treated as “autotelic” (*auto*, “self;” *telos*, “end” or “terminus”—the text as its own end, self-referential), they achieved what before their time was an impossible dream: the disciplinary institutionalization of literary study and criticism.<sup>8</sup>

Their unremitting and nearly exclusive attention to the language of the text, to discern an ensemble of compositional aspects that they consensually argue are pivotal to the syntactic structure and semantic labor of the literary work of art as a whole proved reproducible with a method like close reading and an ontological conception of the text as self-contained and -referential. Think of the poet William Empson who, with *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1949 [1930]), provided a discrete typology, as well as parsimonious illustrations, of the finely graded and labyrinthine ways in which language-use in poetry can be both ambiguous (semantically indeterminate) and polysemous (multivalent, full of multiple meanings). In the 1934 *The World’s Body*, John Crowe Ransom defined poetic imagery as concrete, distinguishing it from more abstract or imperceptible equivalents that are the products of scientific rationality and discourses (which he called “Platonism,” a polite way of dismissing these as specters of an industrializing ethos, to which many of the New Critics [chiefly, the Agrarians among them] were, with their politics of anti-modernity, temperamentally and implacably opposed).<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps the apex of New Critical theorizing, as asserted in most critical accounts, was Cleanth Brooks’ *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (1949 [1947]) which offered both quintessentially typical instances of New Critical practice and a succinct account of New Critical doctrines that in many ways strike the knowledgeable reader as a fulsome compendium of the most consequential ideas of poetic form and language articulated by his preceding colleagues (from Eliot to Empson). To Brooks we owe the most elegant formulations of the notions of tension, paradox, irony, and ambiguity as the

hallmarks of truly modern and achieved poetry. With these devices and strategies, for Brooks, something like poetic theme or content—or meaning, in general—became incarnational in and through the poetic text. *The Well-Wrought Urn* was, of course, best known for its concluding postulation, “the Heresy of the Paraphrase,” which essentially and ultimately maintained that a true poem is irreducible to a propositional statement or some other form of restatement; or alternatively, that to seek to reduce a poem to its content/s is to violate its nature as poetry whose sole career is *to be* itself and not something whose vocation is to communicate a message.

Corollary to heresy is fallacy, which the New-Critical reader is exhorted to eschew with the same ceremonial distaste that must inform an avoidance of the former. In the equally influential essays “The Intentional Fallacy” and “The Affective Fallacy” by W.K. Wimsatt Jr. and Monroe Beardsley, respectively, the New-Critical reader is forewarned not to resort to authorial intention (insofar as this is determinable at all) or to one’s readerly responses (insofar as these ensue and proliferate relativistically) as reliable criteria for appreciating and ‘understanding’ the poem/text.<sup>10</sup>

### Filipino Literary Studies

Four (4) essays, two of them in the Filipino language, compose this special number of *TCR*. Although this is not the first time that *TCR* is publishing Filipino-language work (it has happened at least twice under the founding editorship of Professor Delfin L. Tolentino Jr.), this is the first time that the journal is officially welcoming and encouraging Philippine and Cordillera studies research in the vernacular. Authors of submissions in the Filipino language, in the future, will be requested to provide a short summary of their work in English to accompany the Filipino-language text for the sake of readers not conversant in the national tongue.

As we finalized this assemblage of critical essays, there emerged an almost fortuitous theoretical and critical coherence, or even common responsiveness, of these featured studies, in terms of our editorial framings and formulations of the thematic and methodological foci of this issue. All of our contributions perform close readings of their critical objects or primary texts (one of them, Magallona’s analysis of setting and spaces/places in relation to character development in a Kerima Polotan novel, is a textbook instance of the method’s application); and three of them ostensibly take off from the Linguistic Turn in the discipline and engage in neo-philological investigations of their research materials: Karaan’s innovatively tropological and nesological examination of the survivals of the Sama Dilaut *kata-kata* as creative ways for a seafaring and sea-dwelling people of the Sulu

archipelago to “navigate” their contemporary and historical predicament of ceaseless displacements; the intensive *dalumat ng alamat* [conceptualizations of myth] that Benitez undertakes in “ecological” terms, which ought to be commended for putting Philippine vernacular studies in close dialogue with western literary and critical theory, bridging the institutional chasms between them, and breaking the intellectual self-insularity of each, in a fine effort of cross-cultural analysis; and Jacobo’s dense but dazzling performance of a method of comparativity and contrapuntality in her considerations of the *salin/dakit* [translation/s] of a classic 19<sup>th</sup> century Filipino epistolary novel.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, all these essays reflect in some form on region as a critical category, or point to suggestive expansions and refunctionings of the concept, in the course of analyzing their respective objects, e.g. Magallona’s tracking of the literary cartography by which the Polotan novel’s protagonist moved and navigated between urbane Manila and pastoral Pangasinan; but most especially, Karaan’s provocative proposition of “the possibility of inhabitancy without territoriality” among the traditionally seafaring and sea-dwelling Sama Dilaut (although there is now increasing landed settlement and diasporic dispersal of them across the major Philippine islands). Moving through and across the territorial boundaries of nation-states, and now throughout the archipelago, the Sama Dilaut, for Karaan, radically problematize what she calls, in a highly original coinage, the (prejudicial) *territoriality* that subtends our concepts of region and nation.

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**Acknowledgments** *With this issue, I complete my dual guest-editorship of TCR. I am most grateful to the University of Philippines Baguio Office of the Chancellor and Cordillera Studies Center (CSC) for the trust they reposed in me with the appointment to put together the Cultural Studies and Literary Studies special issues of the journal. The previous Board of Editors provided the close intellectual guidance and engagement, without which the job would have been almost impossible to accomplish. Prof. Grace Subido, Incoming Editor-in-Chief and CSC Director Ruth Tindaan displayed remarkable forbearance with the customary delays attendant to academic publishing and patiently shepherded this project toward its completion. Ivan Emil Labayne provided highly competent editorial assistance. Prof. Delfin L. Tolentino Jr. should know why I continue to be deeply indebted to him and must remain profuse with my thanks. We owe Dr. Analyn Salvador-Amores, Museo Kordilyera Director, for the beautiful cover image from the Museum’s textile collections. Peer review work for this number proved to be truly transnational*

and translocal as Filipino and Filipino American colleagues from various institutions (De La Salle University, Ateneo de Manila University, University of Santo Tomas, University of the Philippines Diliman, University of the Philippines Visayas, Navotas Polytechnic, University of Melbourne, Oakland University, University of Minnesota Twin Cities, and University of Toronto) generously and gamely shared acute suggestions for revision and extensive critical comments for the consideration of our contributors: my heartfelt gratitude to you all.

## NOTES

1. Its periodizing schema, however, notably subsumes the period of Reform and Revolution into the late phase of Spanish-, and early phase of American, colonial rule; the Martial Law era is likewise integrated into the post-independence period. But such is the general problem with *historical period* (along with *major author, style, and genre*) as a demarcating principle of literary studies, all told. Some questionable delineations and subdivisions/exclusions inevitably arise.
2. It is telling that what could be the “literature from the center,” that of the National Capital Region’s, is now deemed to be just another regional formation in Lumbera’s remapping here. TCR founding editor Delfin L. Tolentino Jr., who put together the section on Cordillera Literature and prepared the editorial apparatus for it, problematized what is often critiqued now as “Manila-centrism,” some years back, in a plenary address before the J. Elizalde Navarro National Workshop in the Criticism of the Arts and Humanities, arguing that, in real terms, Manila, as the nation’s political and cultural center, is reducible to regional status in the plurality of composition and constituencies conjured by region as a category and concept (Tolentino 2011). I am grateful to my PhD dissertation advisee at the Ateneo, Doreen Tampus, for introducing me to the notion of *transregionality*, to describe what exceeds and transcends the delineations and demarcations of *region*; I first suggested the term *translocality* in an essay on Filipino American Literature in 1992 (1995, 180 and 183), noting its parallelism to the *transnational* (then the current term for diasporic formations like this emergent tradition) so as to point to what exceeds and transcends nation as a principle for recognizing and mapping new forms of writing like those of Filipinos and Filipino Americans, which are binational in locus and/or provenance.
3. Neither would I cover the contradictions lodged in its very bosom, which led to the articulation and development of post-structur-

alism and its characteristic species of Derridean deconstruction, and which are already well-known. Like any brilliant and revolutionary theory, structuralist linguistics was deeply flawed; see Jacques Derrida’s classic chapter on “The Violence of the Letter” in *Of Grammatology* (1998 [1974]) and the specific chapter where the self-contradictions of this language and sign theory may be found, “Graphic Representation of Language” (Saussure 2011 [1916; 1959], 23-32). The best critical summaries and estimations of the original innovations in theoretical wisdom on language which Saussure made possible with his work are in the extended Introduction to the 2011 edition of *CGL* by Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy, “Saussure and His Contexts” (xv-xlvi); and Benveniste (1971 [1966], 17-48).

4. Only the most nomothetic of the human sciences, economics, with its aspirations to the status of “hard” social science, has proven impervious to this turn, although some argue that neo-Marxist economics, which is otherwise marginalized for political reasons in economics departments, is a “structuralist” expression or rebellion against the predominance of bourgeois or classic-liberal economics and represents a beachhead of the Linguistic Model or analogy within this self-impregnable discipline. On the capitalist market economy as a kind of semiotic system, analogous in its network of exchange relationships to that of language and its network of signs, see Eco (1976, 24-28).
5. Fancy that humankind which created Language in the first place, and continues to, is being relegated here to accidental or accessorial status in relation to linguistic structure—one of Saussure’s axiomatic statements which seems contravened by this otherwise merely heuristic formulary comes to mind here: “...what is natural to mankind is not oral speech but the faculty of constructing a [or any] language, i.e. a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas,” which he calls “the linguistic faculty proper” possessed as an organismic attribute by human beings (*ibid.*, 14-15).
6. See Cruz (2017) for a fascinating account and critique of the Tiempos’ interventions in the local popularization of this theoretical school in the complicated contexts of “American colonial education in the Philippines, American cultural diplomacy, and institutionalized creative writing in the United States.”
7. What follows is closely based on Campomanes, “Edith Tiempo, New-Critical Heretic,” a mss. in pre-published form for a planned tributary anthology in honor of the National Artist for Literature Edith Tiempo and made available in a limited print run for participants at the honorary conference and ceremonies organized

and hosted by the Nueva Vizcaya State University in Bayombong Nueva Vizcaya, in collaboration with the University of Santo Tomas and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in 2009; and on selective or strategic paraphrases of the excellent entry on New Criticism in Gooden and Kreiswirth (1994).

8. For the best reconsiderations of the New Critical legacy, see Lentricchia (1980) and Herrnstein-Smith (2015).
9. See Gooden and Kreiswirth (1994, 530) and, for more on the Agrarians and Empson, see Eagleton (2008 [1983], 33-36 and 38-46).
10. On Brooks, Beardsley, and Wimsatt, see Gooden and Kreiswirth (1994, 531); and the idea of the being of the poem as its meaning as codified before this in poetic discourse itself, recall the concluding couplet in Archibald MacLeish's "Ars Poetica," anthem poem of the New Critics: / A poem should not mean / but be /.
11. Jacobo's proposed method of comparison and counterpoint here is fully operationalized in her earlier work, such as "Homo Tropicus: A Yearning" (2011). In this essay, the catholicity of Pilapil's texts and sources shows in full evidence the expertise of a literary and cultural comparatist; these texts are constellated, and critiqued too, through a method most typical of her discipline, but to which she creatively ascribes a formulary credited to the Filipino polymathic intellectual Jose Rizal, 'los demonios de la comparaciones' / the demons of comparison: a poem by Octavio Paz, a recollection by Jose Rizal himself, the intellectual autobiography of Claude Levi-Strauss (*Tristes Tropiques*), a film (*Orpheu Negro*) and bossa nova music, a poem by T.S. Eliot, and a poem in Filipino by the Tagalog poet Rogelio Mangahas, etc. Through a dexterous reading of selected excerpts from Octavio Paz's "El balcon," Pilapil argues for a keyword of her discourse-idiolect, the "tropics," as a matter of temporality and not spatiality, "with the tropics [understood] as time (*el tiempo*) and not as space (*no la tierra*)." See also Benitez, this volume.

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