

Introduction

Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo

The revived UST Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies begins its second year this semester with a full staff complement, as approved by the Rev. Father Herminio Dagohoy, O.P., Rector Magnificus.

Named Resident Fellows are: Assoc. Prof. Ralph Semino Galán, Assoc. Prof. Nerisa del Carmen Guevara, Asst. Prof. Eros S. Atalia, Mr. Joselito B. Zulueta, Mr. Chuckberry Pascual, Assoc. Prof. Ferdinand Lopez and Ms. Jaymee Siao of the Faculty of Arts and Letters; Dr. Augusto Antonio Aguila of the College of Pharmacy; Dr. John Jack G. Wigley of the College of Physical Rehabilitation; and Joselito D. Delos Reyes of the Faculty of Engineering. Named Associates are: Dr. Rebecca T. Añonevo, Dr. Michael M. Coroza and Dr. Oscar Campomanes of the Graduate School. (The Resident Fellows are full-time faculty members while the Associates are part-time faculty members.)

Their appointments are in line with the vision of the UST CCWLS as a literary academy, the members of which will provide peer support for each other, serve as an inspiration for other writers and literary scholars in the UST community, and implement programs and projects designed to turn the UST CCWLS into a literary hub.

Given the bias – even in institutions like UST, which are viewed by the general public as bastions of classical learning and old-fashioned values – for disciplines preparing students for more lucrative professions, the writers and artists among us can only be gratified and

grateful for this clear signal of support from the Office of the Rector. Without going into the arguments for and against the effects on literary production of the democratic blogs and “notes” featured on social networking sites, one might interpret this move on the part of the UST administration as a recognition of the need to set standards where literature and literary scholarship are concerned, an important part of academe’s responsibility to provide guidance to the young persons who enrol in order to learn.

Another step forward for the UST CCWLS is the presentation of the second issue of the revived literary journal, *Tomas*. Like the first issue, *Tomas 2* is a showcase for Thomasian literary talents.

In my Introduction to *Tomas 1*, I referred to National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera’s Paz Latorena Commemorative Lecture, in which he underscored the need for literary scholarship to arrive at a fair assessment of the University’s contributions to Philippine Literature. This important lecture, titled “Stepping Forward at 400: the Literary Production of UST,” is part of this issue.

Lumbera traces this body of work – from its roots in the 1930s with Alejandro Abadilla and Genoveva Edroza, through the post-war years with Frankie Sionil Jose (later named National Artist as well), Juan Capiendo Tuvera and Juan T. Gatbonton; Ophelia Alcantara Dimalanta, Wilfredo Nollo, and Rolando Tinio in the ‘60s; Federico Licsi Espino, Rogelio Sicut, Norma Miraflores, and Cirilo Bautista in the ‘70s to Neil Garcia in the 90s. He briefly discusses the writers’ major contributions, giving part of the credit to the “dedicated, passionate teachers” who, though they taught literature, not creative writing, nurtured in their students “a love of language and intense respect for masters of literary craft,” thus “awakening in them “the urgency of carrying out the task of making literature light one’s way through life.”

This essay has inspired a group of Thomasian writers in the faculty to want to undertake a catalogue of Thomasian writers, which might serve as a first step to retrieving and reprinting long-forgotten literary works.

In the meantime, the production of new literature and literary scholarships proceeds apace. Resident Fellows Ralph Galan, Augusto Aguila, and Jack Wigley have recently released their first books, literary criticism, short fiction, and creative nonfiction respectively. Alumnus

Carlomar Daoana won a Carlos Palanca gold for his suite of poems, which is included in this issue.

From alumni Cirilo F. Bautista and Recah Trinidad come excerpts from forthcoming novels, and from alumnus Albert Casuga, their contemporary, now residing in Canada, comes a second suite of poems (the first suite was part of *Tomas 1*). CCWLS Associate Oscar V. Campomanes contributes a study of Linda Ty-Casper's novel, *Ten Thousand Seeds*. Another CCWLS Associate Michael Coroza (Secretary General of UMPIL), and alumna Alma Anonas-Carpio (literary editor of the *Graphic*, one of the few magazines still publishing literary pieces), contribute a suite of poems each, modern versions of traditional poetic forms by the former, and feminist poems by the latter. Resident Fellow Nerisa del Carmen Guevara contributes nonfiction which is both family memoir and social history about the Marikina shoe industry. Alumnus Jose Victor Torres contributes a play which is a monologue inspired by a poem and an essay by Jhoanna Lynn Cruz.

The youngest generation of Thomasian writers is represented by faculty member Paul Alcosoba Castillo, winner of this year's Rector's Literary Award in the 28th Gawad Usteteka, who contributes his winning suite of poems; graduate student Zendy Victoria Sue G. Valencia, and alumna Katrina del Rosario, who both contribute sensitive recollections of troubled periods in their lives.

But even as we launch *Tomas 2*, we have sent out a call for submissions to *Tomas 3*, which will be open to all writers and literary scholars regardless of institutional affiliation or geographic location. Fiction (either short stories or excerpts of novels), a suite of five poems, nonfiction (essays, memoirs, profiles, travelogues, etc.), drama (for stage, film or TV), plays, art works, photo essays, cartoons, graphic fiction, (and interesting variants or combinations of the above) are welcome. Deadline for submission is July 31, 2013.

– Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo
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