

The Flower of Heidelberg

Alvin B. Yapan

Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippines

• <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-9231-3414>

Christian Jil R. Benitez (Trans.)

Chulalongkorn University, Thailand & Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippines

• <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0654-1698>

Abstract

Set in the year 2577, this short story imagines a dystopic future where all languages—except for five from the imperial temperate world—have been almost wiped out by five homogenous global capitalist entities, each known as Corporation (according to each corporation's home language). In this bleak future, linguists exist not as scholars but as peddlers of languages, particularly endangered ones, including the various Filipino vernaculars. The lives of linguists are made precarious by the Corporation, with its clear intention to monopolize power over human communication by homogenizing language, making the marginal ones, along with their peddlers, extinct. The short story unfolds as a diary entry of an unnamed linguist of Tagalog, a Filipino vernacular, as they ruminate on the 1886 poem "A las flores del Heidelberg" by the Filipino patriot José Rizal. After receiving an offer from the German Koerperschaft, which they cannot refuse, the linguist attempts to imagine a way through the hegemony, even if it takes the bending of time itself. Accompanying the story is a short translator's note which contextualizes the translation process, and draws a preliminary parallel between the narrative translated and the practice of translation itself in the midst of the turbulent present.

Keywords: dystopian future, tropical futurism, Philippine fiction in translation, José Rizal

The Flower of Heidelberg

30 December 2577

Reasons for writing in a diary:

a) Then: So I could practice as a *linguist*.

Linguist: retailer in the language market. A word in *English*

English: the language used by Corporation Domain, the largest among the five Corporations. It includes Coco-Mango Land, the name given by my fellow traders to the place where I live. This name is not officially used in the public domain. But it stuck because the place originated the copyright for coconut and mango flavors sold by the Corporation. Long ago, José Rizal, a prominent patriot, called the place Filipinas. The language used by those who live here is *Filipino*.

Filipino: the language I trade, which partly combines English, Spanish, Japanese, and others. Thus, in a way, Filipino could've been a larger language than English. But since the Corporation uses English, this has caused Filipino to die. However, in my writing, English is still considered to be a part of Filipino.

that used to pertain to a profession which devoted hours to studying languages and their structures. In the present day, however, to be a linguist simply means to *peddle*

Peddle: it is crucial to distinguish the business of peddling languages from peddling other products, as the former has its own system. Language differs from the antiques sold in *museums*

Museum: A place or a building that used to house artifacts, visited by people to learn the history of their country or race. In the present, it serves as a store for artifacts made more valuable by their endurance of time. But according to cyberfiremen and cybermasons,

Cyberfireman, cybermason: self-identification of hackers, derived from the act of demolishing and burning firewalls.

even antique retailers may easily lose their job with the invention of the time machine. I don't believe them, of course. They've been saying this for quite some time now, but like the so-called end of the world, they still have no evidence to show.

all over the world, like vintage computers, early robot pet models, Tamagochis, hardcopies of *Neuromancer* and *Count Zero* by William Gibson, the first stomach sculptures, etc. Unlike such things, languages cannot be collected just for the sake of collecting; instead, they have to be collected for the purposes they might serve. When a language is not understood, it loses its purpose. And so, I should not forget the purpose of the language I peddle, which is Filipino.

language. In my case, I sell words from old Filipino. Therefore, I need to practice using it, for otherwise I myself might also forget how to use it. Among the things I do to practice Filipino and its structure is to write entries like this on another computer that is not connected to W3; this way, no one can steal my words. But I also know that no matter how hard I try, I will never completely understand the language because after all, I only talk to myself. I cannot even write smoothly, with transitions, flow, and structure in mind of how thinking unfolds. And so, if José Rizal would ever get to read these entries, he would also probably not understand them.

The language I sell has been long dead, wiped out by dominant languages, namely English, Japanese, German, French, and Spanish. It was only after languages such as Filipino had disappeared from the face of the earth that people began to recognize their value: they realized that the languages that survived the abolishment of nations do not suffice to name the entire experience of the human race. And the range of human experience still continues to expand, especially after the discovery of various organisms on *Io*,

Io: the fifth moon of Jupiter. A couple of days ago, the *uchuuhikoushis* of the *Kaishas* from *Io* discovered something.

They saw unidentifiable creatures that lived right in the craters of active volcanos, which they initially thought were mere bursts of flames. But after a more careful study, the flames moved on their own, and turned out to be alive. The upper bodies of the creatures detach themselves to look for something to burn on the rocky surface of Io, and then reattach afterwards. No uchuuhikoushi could explain the phenomenon. The Kaishas posted an advertisement in the language market right away, seeking a name for the creatures. In the subsequent *bidding*,

Bidding: peddling of words. Because science has always believed that humankind will never discover anything new outside Earth, the universe's macrocosm could be recognized, and thus understood, in the microcosm of this planet. Hence if something discovered outside this planet turns out to be inexplicable, it is only because the precise word that some culture uses to signify it has yet to be found. We linguists who safeguard the cultures could potentially explain such things. The science of taxonomy no longer finds it productive to name new organisms after their discoverers or in plain numbers; there are now too many people, and thus similar names have become more common. Instead, they imitate what humans did at the beginning of the 20th century, which was to name planets after figures from the mythology of an ancient civilization.

I won. In such instances in the language market, linguists compete to provide the word that would best encapsulate the described phenomenon. The word I sold was *aswang*,

Aswang: a creature said to once exist in the archipelago in various forms, the most popular among which is that which splits itself in half to let its upper part feed.

and only after I mentioned the word the uchuuhikoushis realized that the burning they saw were the creatures feeding.

Europa, Ganymede, Titan, and Triton. But language doesn't develop at a sufficient rate, remaining incapable to name everything new that emerges and humankind continues to discover. Language doesn't even adapt proportionally to the unrelenting expansion of *cyberspace*.

Cyberspace: space created by the information entered by wetware through connecting hard- and software which now has an intelligence of its own within W3. The wetware that created it were shocked when the mathematics behind its claim that it doesn't have *limits*

Limit: the lack worsened by the death of languages, made much easier. This explains the present demand for words from languages that nobody uses anymore. Every language has its own structure. Stringing and connecting different words together creates meaning. Some previously believed that the permutation of these words is infinite. But as W3 grew further, mathematics discovered that even this permutation has a limit. The possibility of W3 is much larger, far larger than the permutation of structures in English, Japanese, German, French, and Spanish. So much so that the structures of other languages that linguists safeguard had to be included too. For in the domination of English, Japanese, German, French, and Spanish, language has lost the capacity to develop. As time passed, it lost the capacity to coin new words, which could've paralleled the expansion of cyberspace. Words have been used repetitively, but no new meanings have been created because there have been no misunderstandings, as almost everyone under the control of the five Corporations uses a corporate language.

in its endless permutations turned out to have limits. This way, language and cyberspace, believed to be parallel lines, finally intersected.

And so, many worry about cyberspace having a life of its own. Cyberspace continues to expand, acquiring a life, just like the universe that also continues to expand. Thus, they fear humans will have to fill the empty space that cyberspace creates with information so that everything remains under surveillance; otherwise, a time might come when machines completely overpower humans. Others speculate that machines have already been running the Corporations for some time now, but others ask, what is the matter, what even is a machine, and what is it to be human?

b) Now: Today, my reason for writing in this diary is different: to help me decide about and plan for an offer I received from the Koerperschaft regarding a Filipino *tula*

Tula: I could not find an equivalent to this word, even though there is a word for this in every dominant language: gedicht, sakka, poeme, poema, poem. Reading through its samples, it appears to be a manner of using language that has the ability to guide the mind without dictating what to think.

titled “A las flores del Heidelberg,” written by a certain José Rizal. In truth, it should not be difficult for me to sell this because it was not written in the language I work with. It should not matter much to me; it is no use to me as I cannot understand it. Yet how can I sell it if I don’t know its purpose? It was written in old Spanish. But I hesitate to share it with Spanish linguists because they might just steal its words, their software easily swallowing the entire text. What I don’t understand is after I asked cyberfiremen and cybermasons to translate it in exchange for the word *loob*,

Loob: denotes what is inside, but once more commonly used idiomatically to pertain to an individual’s will, heart, soul, etc., or precisely the internal aspect of their personhood.

I felt like I could no longer let it go, a text that, until a few days ago, I didn’t even know I had in my possession, among the stacks of books collected by my ancestors. I couldn’t get it out of my head, especially its last stanza:

*Mas ¡ay! llegaréis, flores,
conservaréis quizás vuestros colores;
pero lejos del patrio, heroico suelo
a quien debéis la vida,
perderéis los olores;
que aroma es alma, y no abandona el cielo,
cuya luz viera en su nacer, ni olvida.*

I decided to delay selling it so I could think about it more carefully, so I wouldn’t eventually regret selling it. Because according to the warnings I had heard from cyberfiremen and cybermasons, Koerperschaft may have a different plan for the text, as they’ve been buying words related to Heidelberg in bulk for the past few months. I haven’t heard from the cyberfiremen and cybermasons recently,

who also had told me about the invention of the time machine by Koerperschaft and their refusal to announce it and make it available for public consumption, out of fear that this would change the course of history and put an end to the power they relish.

I tested how serious Koerperschaft was about the text I have. Though I knew they would never tell me their true intention, I asked them what they planned to do with it anyway. It is one of the things that a linguist must never do in negotiations. A client usually stops responding when a linguist asks such a question. Or one could expect a curt response: that whatever they would do with the word they purchase is none of my business because I am simply a linguist. That my job is to sell words, not ask questions about what happens once they get sold. So, when they replied, I didn't know whether I should be surprised by their answer or the fact that they had an answer. I was also surprised that they replied to me at all. And that they replied respectfully. They gave me a reason, though I knew well enough it was not true.

Koerperschaft said they needed the text for a tourist spot they were building in their domain. They planned to build a new space through reconstructing Heidelberg. They said they found out that I have a text related to the flowers of Heidelberg. And Heidelberg wouldn't be a beautiful place without flowers, would it? At the end of their response, they told me to name my price.

I was shocked by their offer, and impressed by their researchers. Linguists don't belong to the world surveilled by the Corporations; we can't be found even in the archives. We don't need firewalls because we don't belong to W3. And yet, they still managed to find me. I realized then how serious they were about the text. What puzzled me was the fact that it was not even written in German; it would've made better sense if the Corporación took interest in it instead of the Koerperschaft. And in the language market, a client would never ask a linguist to name their price. Usually, the two parties negotiate until they agree on a number. So I couldn't imagine what they would get out of the text. Something about it didn't add up. I knew the reason they gave me was not true because they would surely gain nothing from creating a tourist spot in the wetware world. Whatever they could possibly earn from this would be nothing compared to an investment in Europa, Ganymede, or Titan. But then, finance was clearly not their concern.

I wanted to test Koerperschaft more. But I knew I could go only so far. I wanted to ask them what would happen if I didn't want to sell them the text, though I

already knew that they couldn't be refused, despite the fact that linguists are well outside the Corporation Domain.

How linguists escaped the Corporations:

Warning: everything here is mere speculation because the Corporations themselves have burnt their archives, erasing all the history of cyberspace. This is a speculation that we linguists came up with, in collaboration with cyberfiremen and cybermasons.

The Corporation Domain started as small businesses, as small as individual linguists, at the turn of 21st century. In the beginning, nobody doubted their intentions as they helped many people and countries. They fought for peace. They gave out funds and support to those who had peace programs, and rewarded countries who were able to increase the literacy rate of their people. They invested large amounts of money in the field of education. But everyone slowly understood that these were all part of the long-term investment of the Corporation. They fought for peace because wars and social violence became a hindrance to the growth of their business. In the end, they showed that it was geopolitical borders between nations that waged war and divided the world. They claimed to stand for a global culture without disagreements, only world peace. And here, their investment in education paid off, because the education they supported was transnational, where only the language of their trade was used. And so, small businesses were purged, nations were abolished, and languages aside from English, Japanese, German, French, and Spanish were all wiped out. But under the supposed banner of peace that they waved, the five Corporations that emerged and gained control over these remaining languages continued threatening each other until only one of them would be left standing. And so, they didn't really plan to include the languages that linguists sell to their domains. They didn't bother about these languages because they had originally planned to wipe them all out to secure total power. But when they discovered the lack in their systems, their view on these languages suddenly changed. They tried to woo us linguists and buy our languages for their projects in outer space and cyberspace. They supported us so we could continue taking care of the languages and cultures we know. They paid us. They couldn't kill us because they still needed us. But eventually, we also realized that this is only temporary, lasting only as long as the Corporations haven't found an alternative. We knew that they still consider us threats to their power; they just couldn't let it show

because we still have a purpose. There are stories about some linguists killed by the Corporations because they refused to sell them languages they desperately needed. In doing business with them, our lives are at stake. As long as we have something to offer, we still have some purpose, and they won't dare harm us. But once they no longer find us useful, they wouldn't mind having us dead.

When no cyberfireman or cybermason responded to me, I understood right away. They might've all gone into hiding, fearing that the Corporations might soon find them if we continued communicating. If Koerperschaft was able to find a text that even I didn't know I had, it was likely that they could find cyberfiremen and cybermasons too. But it was also likely that they were already dead. Nobody knows and will ever know for sure because as wetware, we never know each other. We thought staying anonymous, even to each other, would be our protection from the Corporations. We realize now how large a threat this is to our lives. Perhaps the rumor about a project that Koerperschaft will call *Heidelberg* is true. It was said that Heidelberg is going to replace all linguists, paving the way for the total wipeout of other languages. Koerperschaft just couldn't execute the final stages of the experiment; they feared that other Corporations might hear about it and imitate the plan. So first they have to erase all traces in cyberspace that could prove the existence of the experiment. They looked for a name that could contain all the information about the project, and they happened to choose the name *Heidelberg*, an old name for a university, a producer of knowledge during the 20th century. In this way, they plan to own the word *Heidelberg* all over the world so it will no longer be found in cyberspace, thus erasing it.

Heidelberg will invent a language based not on words but images. The tongue will finally lose its purpose. Humans will communicate through their eyes. Everyone across all languages will have to undergo eye surgery to install a mechanism linked to the brain. Their new eyes will translate all the images that the brain thinks and wants to convey. And because this mechanism is electronic, the images can be transferred to the eyes of anyone one wants to communicate with. Through this, humans will begin to converse through images, not sound.

This surgery will likely be availed by everyone since there has been a growing concern over the deterioration of human imagination due to the decline of new words. The solution that Heidelberg offers will not recover the purpose of various languages but turns to an altogether new manner of thinking, one based

on images. Imagination will have a new purpose too because people will be comparing images they want to convey.

But according to cyberfiremen and cybermasons, this is not so different from how the Corporations once fought for peace. Not all images the brain creates will be understood by the mechanism installed in human eyes. Koerperschaft will limit the images that the eyes will be able to recognize and create. The human condition will only worsen, as imagination itself will ultimately be in the hands of Koerperschaft. This will all eventually lead to people buying their own imagination. Due to this technology, the other Corporations will lose their markets based on words. Koerperschaft, in the end, will prevail.

Everything adds up, and I can see it now. Humans will never realize that Koerperschaft has been tricking everyone because their capacity to grasp such a complex idea has deteriorated. Only we outside the languages controlled by the Corporations could imagine all this. And so, it is likely that they will have us linguists killed, one by one, if we continue resisting inclusion in the domain of these Corporations.

I didn't know what to do. I couldn't say no to Koerperschaft, refusing to sell them "A las flores del Heidelberg." But I couldn't go to other Corporations either, because they'd only kill me to make sure that no one else would know about Heidelberg. I didn't want to push my luck any further. I knew I could no longer hold off on their offer because they could just come and kill me instead. So I gave them my price. Three billion dollars for "A las flores del Heidelberg!" I made it so, hoping they'd finally leave me alone, hoping that the rumors I had heard from cyberfiremen and cybermasons were not true. But immediately, I received another reply: Koerperschaft agreed to the price. They asked me for my BankNet number. Not long after, I found myself reading "A last flores del Heidelberg" again.

In the text, I read what will become of my fate. Eventually, José Rizal and I won't be so different: both strangers in Heidelberg who remember their own country. When the project is finally finished, Koerperschaft will convince me to enter their domain, and I will find myself remembering a place in history when there was still no Koerperschaft, Kaishas, Corporación, Corporations in English and French; when wars still abounded, and so did epidemics, pestilence, and violence. A time when humans still fought for their nations, as they were known then, as well as their rights. When there was still such a thing as principle, and people still shed tears because of grief, anger, and yearning.

Several days passed while all I did was stare at the text. What is it really about? What even is a tula? Until I received a message from Koerperschaft asking me for “A las flores del Heidelberg” as soon as possible. I couldn’t do anything but apologize. I told them how sentimental I was over the text, as it was handed down by my ancestors, some of whom died while stealing books from the national library as nations collapsed. I asked if they could grant me one more wish aside from their payment, and they immediately agreed; for the first time, I wasn’t happy about a quick deal with a client in the language market. I told them that I want a flower from Heidelberg—in exchange for words, I wanted a real flower of Heidelberg.

The next day, Koerperschaft replied, saying that Rizal’s flower in Heidelberg has been long extinct. But the DNA structure of the species is stored in their archive. So instead, they could give me a clone of the flower of Heidelberg. I no longer refused; it was enough for me. I asked them to put it in a time-suspension capsule so that the flower wouldn’t wither. And earlier today, the flower arrived at my doorstep. Rizal was right:

*que aroma es almo, y no abandona el cielo,
cuya luz viera en su nacer, ni olvida*

This will be my weapon when the Koerperschaft polizei arrive once they finally complete Heidelberg. But until then, I will prepare myself. I will let them put a permanent machine bracelet on my wrist, underneath my skin. And in what they’ll think as a mere decoration to my body, I’ll slowly slip in a chip containing everything I’ve written and have yet to write in my diary, until the polizei at last knock at my door.

When the time comes, I won’t be worried. I’ll accept their offer to enter the world of Corporations. I won’t be able to do anything for the language of my trade. They will burn everything down right in front of me, and I won’t shed a single tear nor feel a hint of regret because I’ll have a clone of the flower of Heidelberg that will never wither. The flower shall remind me every day that once, there was a text that spoke about a real flower in a distant time I’ve long yearned for. And when the time comes when Koeperschaft finally thinks it is safe to introduce their time machine to the public, I’ll revive the plans I’ve prepared in my diary, which I’ll slowly pull out from my body. I’ll send this flower back to José Rizal in Heidelberg in 1886. I’ll show him a flower of Heidelberg taken away from its soil and time, and I know, I just know, that this will create a ripple that will swell across the sea of histories hushed down by the Corporations.

Translator's Note

Alvin B. Yapan's "Ang Bulaklak ng Heidelberg" first appeared in *Ang Aklat Likhaan ng Tula at Maikling Kuwento 2001*, edited by Domingo G. Landicho and Lilia Quindoza Santiago, published by the University of the Philippines Press in 2003. Written at the turn of the millennium, the short story echoes the anxiety of its time regarding globalization, technology, and—coming from its particular context—the future of the Filipino language and literature.¹ Though the present translation strives to stick as close as possible to the original, it adds two new fragments to the text, namely the brief entries for the Filipino words *aswang* and *loob*, as a way to explain their cultural significance to readers unfamiliar with the Philippine world. For a preliminary entry regarding these concepts, see Lynch (1998) and Mercado (1994, ch. 2), respectively.

The translation of the short story was completed in Verden, Germany, just days prior to the 2024 Frankfurt Book Fair—a circumstance worth mentioning for its overall irony that must not be missed. In the story, an unnamed linguist had to yield to the coercion of one of the five hegemonic Corporations, selling the presumably last copy of José Rizal's 1886 poem "A las flores del Heidelberg" to the dominating force that dreams of total monopoly over human communication and imagination. Meanwhile, there I was, a nascent translator, who stumbled upon the practice rather unexpectedly (see Benitez, 2024, pp. 70-71), about to attend the world's oldest and largest trade fair for books, which is more precisely a venue for selling publication and translation rights (perhaps not too different from the envisioned bidding in the story); and which has, furthermore, been called out for being complicit in the ongoing genocide of the subtropics of Gaza (Publishers for Palestine, 2024).

I was fully aware of the resources that the Philippine government had expended, and continues to expend, on the fair, especially since the country has won the bid to be its guest of honor later in 2025 (see Cruz, 2024). And so, back then, I was compelled to do well, to make the most out of the experience, however conflicting, however suspicious I was, and still am, of the entire fair, not simply for the sake of a hollow Filipino pride, but for the wild hope of making more space for the Philippines in so-called "world literature." And so, while I know I could simply turn my back on the fair, I also recognize its value. Perhaps this can be considered getting my hands dirty, doing something that is also somehow necessary? After all, I am still a citizen of my country—which imbues me with a sense of responsibility to my fellow Filipinos as a practitioner of literature (in itself a privilege) to make this participation in the trade fair worth something.

¹ During this time, the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature, the foremost literary contest in the Philippines, also opened the category "Futuristic Fiction," in both English and Filipino, where Yapan (2019) also won first prize in 2002.

Somehow, a parallel, but not necessarily commensurate, similarity between the short story I was translating and the circumstance itself of the translation was transpiring. Considering that translation, especially from a minor language such as Filipino into English, is commonly recognized as perpetuating “the colonial right of people privileged by Empire to access all kinds of information” (Barokka, 2022, p. 66), the act of rendering the Filipino short story to English appears to mimic the yielding of the narrative’s unnamed protagonist to the Corporation. Both seem to grant entry for the dominating power to a body of knowledge that is supposed to be available only to those who are part of a particular culture. However, as Yapan’s story also shows, the protagonist, desperate as they are, also does this in the off chance of telegraphing a message back to the past, all the way to Rizal himself, so as to perhaps incite a different future for everyone. In this sense, the last moment in the story becomes instructive, as it offers a way to imagine other possibilities even in the midst of the bleakest present. Ironically, what initially appears to be a concession intimates itself to be a gesture of resistance—“the possibility of revolt [that] is predicated on ‘the last possible moment’ (which is the only possible moment)” (Chrostowska, 2012, p. 54). It is hope distilled, insisting that it cannot be otherwise, because indeed it cannot be otherwise.

Given the fine line I am treading, I can only hope that my translation of Yapan’s story into English, previous participation in the contentious trade fair, and continuation of my practice as a translator would gesture toward something similar to what the fictive translator envisions. To “decolonize” translation—especially from a tropical language to a temperate hegemonic language such as English—is too grand and seemingly impossible an ambition. But regardless, I insist on wanting to wager on a future for my work, or at least this short story translation, where it reaches someone somewhere who doesn’t know much about the Philippines, but after stumbling upon “The Flower of Heidelberg,” would somehow understand this contemporary parable and surprisingly recognize themselves here, precisely in “the eyes of the other” (Spivak, 2003, 23), as *an other*, no matter how obliquely, how briefly. I believe in this possibility because I myself have experienced it, I have lived it, in reading and being moved by literatures from other parts of the world. And perhaps, I believe in this possibility precisely because as a practitioner of literature, I must hope for it.

Never have I had the delusion that literature alone can change the barbaric course of human—especially Eurowestern and temperate—history; that it could cause a crucial change of heart to seats of power. But I nevertheless hope for a translation that might tend to the “anonymous, faceless fellow-[others]” (Anderson, 2006, 154), with whom we can come into solidarity, however virtual or momentary; in other words, a translation that might “fray” (Spivak, 2022, 39) the colonial logic, which has kept us, with our comparable plights, apart for so long. For if not, what good can literature be?

Rizal himself told us the answer a long time ago: "*Es un pedruzco perdido en el campo sin formar parte de ningun edificio*" (Rizal, 1891, p. 50). A stone lost in the fields without forming a part of any edifice.

References

- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.
- Barokka, K. (2022). Right to Access, Right of Refusal: Translation of/as Absences, Sanctuary, Weapon." In K. Bhanot & J. Tiang (Eds.), *Violent Phenomena: 21 Essays on Translation* (pp. 65-76). Tilted Axis.
- Benitez, C. J. R. (2024). Stony Brook Souvenir and other translated poems. *Akda: The Asian Journal of Literature, Culture, Performance*, 4(1), pp. 69-80.
<https://doi.org/10.59588/2782-8875.1076>
- Chrostowska, S. D. (2012). Angelus Novus, Angst of History. *Diacritics: A review of contemporary criticism*, 40(1), pp. 42-68. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dia.2010.0012>
- Cruz, E. S. (2024, Oct. 13). Guest of Honor at Frankfurter Buchmesse 2025.
<https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/opinion/2024/10/13/2392078/guest-honor-frankfurter-buchmesse-2025>
- Lynch, F., S.J. (1998). *The Aswang Inquiry* (G. Cordero-Fernando, Illus.). GCF Books.
- Mercado, L. N. (1994). *The Filipino Mind*. The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Publishers for Palestine. (2024, Sept. 23). *Publishers for Palestine Open Letter to the Frankfurt Book Fair*. <https://publishersforpalestine.org/2024/09/23/publishers-for-palestine-open-letter-to-the-frankfurt-book-fair/>
- Rizal, J. (1891). *El Filibusterismo*. Boekdrukkerij F. Meyer-Van Loo.
- Spivak, G. C. (2003). *Death of a Discipline*. Columbia University Press.
- Spivak, G. C. (2022). *Living Translation* (E. Apter et al, Eds.). Seagull Books.
- Yapan, A. B., & Benitez, C. J. R. (trans.). (2019). Apocalypse. *eTropic: electronic journal of studies in the Tropics*, 18(2), pp. 32-42.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.25120/etropic.18.2.2019.3704>

Alvin B. Yapan is a writer, educator, and filmmaker. His short stories and novels have won critical praise from Palanca Awards, the Philippine National Book Award, and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Writers' Prize. His first novel in the vernacular, *Ang Sandali ng mga Mata* (Time of the Eye, 2006), and his collection of short stories, *Sangkatauhan Sangkahayupan* (Humanity Bestiary, 2017), both received the Philippine National Book Award. He was a fellow at the 2022 Writers Immersion and Cultural Exchange (WrICE) of Sing Lit Station (SLS) and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University. With a doctoral degree in Philippine Studies, his research interests include the epic genre, folk aesthetics, and literature in the vernacular. He also finds time to produce and direct films in the middle of his teaching commitments at the Department of Filipino, Ateneo de Manila University. His works, both in fiction and film, delve into the uncanny aspects of contemporary encounters with the non- and post-human.

Christian Jil R. Benitez is a Filipino scholar, poet, and translator. He is currently pursuing his PhD in comparative literature at Chulalongkorn University. He teaches at the Ateneo de Manila University, in the Philippines, where he earned his AB-MA in Filipino literature. His critical and creative works have appeared in various journals and anthologies, the most recent of which include the *eTropics* double special issue "Queering the Tropics" (2024), the edited volume *Poetry and the Global Climate Crisis* (Routledge, 2023), and the *Manoa* special issue "Here was Once the Sea: An Anthology of Southeast Asian Ecowriting" (2024). His first book *Isang Dalumat ng Panahon* (A Theory of Time, ADMU Press, 2022) received the Philippine National Book Award for literary criticism and cultural studies. His English translation of *Arasahas: Poems from the Tropics* was published by PAWA Press and Paloma Press.