

## KOLUM KRITIKA

### ANG ATENEO SA KASAYSAYAN KO BILANG GURO NG PANITIKAN

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#### About the Author

Bienvenido Lumbera, one of the most multi-awarded Filipinos today, was named National Artist for Literature in 2006 for outstanding contributions to the development of Philippine arts and culture. He was Ateneo's Tanglaw ng Lahi Awardee in 2000, recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1993, and winner of many literary awards like the Centennial Literary Awards in Playwriting in 1998. He is one of the Philippines's most respected literary and cultural critics who has published books of poems, plays, librettos, essays, translations, criticisms, and who still mentors today's better writers, teachers, and scholars. Detained during the Marcos dictatorship, he continues to be active in movements for nationalism, freedom, and democracy; he is national council member of the multi-sectoral Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) and chair of Concerned Artists of the Philippines (CAP). He was Irwin Chair Professor of Literature in the English Department of the Ateneo de Manila University, and now Professor Emeritus of the University of the Philippines.

#### About the Translator

Charlie Samuya Veric is a PhD student in American Studies and member of the Working Group on Globalization and Culture at Yale University. He is the editor of *Anticipating Filipinas: Reading Bienvenido Lumbera as Critic* (2006) and co-editor with Alice Guillermo of *Suri at Sipat: Araling Ka Amado* (2004). His recent publications have appeared in the journals *American Quarterly*, *Common Knowledge*, and *Rethinking History*.

Nang hingan ako ng talaan ng mga taong gusto kong maging panauhin sa okasyong ito, napukaw ang mga alaala ng sampung taong inilagi ko sa unibersidad na ito. Unang nagbangon sa gunita ang mga mukha ng mga estudyante at kapwa guro. Mga lugar sa kampus at mga pangyayari. At mga damdamin at diwang dinanas ko sa pakikipagkapwa sa mga gurong kapanahon ko, at sa pag-ugnay sa mga estudyante at sa mga tradisyon ng unibersidad. Kasabay ng mga alaala dumagsa ang mga yugto sa buhay ko nang

ako'y nagsisimula pa lamang magturo at magpakilala bilang propesyonal sa labas ng unibersidad.

Apat na mukha ng estudyante ang bibigyan ko ng pangalan. Una, si Ferdinand Arceo na, sa pananalita ng mga aktibista, siyang "dumikit" sa akin upang maipaloob ako sa kilusang makabayan nang nagsisimula pa lamang pasukin ng mga radikal ang unibersidad. Dito ay katuwang niya si Perfecto "Boy" Martin, isa kong estudyanteng aktibista rin, na hanggang sa kasalukuyan ay kasama pa rin at kaibigan. Pagkaraan ng Martial Law, nagpamilya si Boy at napunta sa desktop publishing. Si Ferdie ay umanib sa NPA at nang kabababa pa lamang ng Martial Law ay nasawi sa isang engkwentro. Ang laki ng panghihinayang ko sa naputol na ugnay niya sa aking buhay ay hindi na mabubura ng mga taon.

Sa pagsubaybay ko sa naging kapalaran ng mga estudyanteng nakilala ko sa Ateneo, malaki ang natutuhan ko sa naging pagbabago sa politika ni Edgar Jopson. Dahil iba ang kanyang pananaw pampolitika sa aking natutuhan sa kilusang pambansa demokrasya, hindi ko siya gaanong kinilala sa panahong kapwa kami nasa kampus. Nang muli kami magtagpo sa panahon ng Martial Law, malinaw ang leksiyong itinuro ng buhay niya sa akin bilang guro—humanga ako sa kanyang integridad at masugid na paglilingkod sa sambayanan. Tinanggap ni Edjop ang radikal na tugon sa diktadura at nagbuwis siya ng buhay sa pakikibakang andergrawn.

Ang ikapat na estudyanteng ang pangalan ay humihinging alalahanin ay si Emmanuel Lacaba. Naging research assistant ko siya sa isang proyekto sa panitikan, pero halos hindi kami nagkikita dahil madalas ay nasa bundok siya noon ng Banahaw. Dumating siya sa Ateneo mula sa pagiging American Field Scholar na tila Amerikanisadong teenager na tumutula ng mga akdang Ingles na mahirap unawain. Ipinagpalagay ko na ang panahong inilagi niya sa Amerika ay nakapag-iwan sa kanyang kamalayan ng permanenteng tatak ng hippie culture. Subalit nagpamalas siya ng pambihirang kakayahang tuklasin ang kanyang pagka-Filipino. Sumangkot siya sa pakikibaka ng mga manggagawa hanggang umakyat siya sa mga kabundukang ng Davao bilang isang Pulang Mandirigma. Doon sa wikang Ingles pa rin tumutula subalit karanasan na ng makabayang gerilya ang pinapaksa.

Hindi ko bibigyan ng pangalan ang ikalimang estudyante. Siya ang aktibistang Atenista na sumalo sa akin nang mapasok ako sa Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC) bilang bilanggong pulitikal noong 1974. Nauna na siyang naging bilanggong politikal kaya't sanay na siya sa kultura ng bilangguan, at siya ang kumupkop sa akin sa mga unang araw ng aking pagkakulong. Kinilala ko ang kanyang talino at tapang kaya't nang

siya ay pumailalim sa anino ni Presidente Macapagal-Arroyo ay nakaramdam ako ng magkahalang pagkabigo, pagkamuhi at panghihinayang.

Sa naging pag-unlad ng aking diwa sa panahong nagturo ako sa Ateneo ay kailangan kong isangkot ang bisa ng pakikipagpalitan ng mga kuro-kuro sa mga kapwa propesor na naging katrabaho ko sa mga komiteng kinabilangan ko. Si Doreen Fernandez ang unang-una sa mga dapat kong gunitain at pasalamat. Estudyante ko siya sa Graduate School ng Ateneo, isang iskolar na masikap sa pananaliksik at kritikong mapagkumbaba subalit matalisik humango ng kabatiran. Alam kong kanya ang naging pananalita ng mga citation na nagtampok sa mga kapurihan ng dating guro niya nang ang inyong lingkod ay parangalan ng Ramon Magsaysay Foundation at nang ako ay gawaran ng Ateneo ng parangal Tanglaw ng Lahi.

Nang hindi ako makabalik sa Ateneo bilang Full Professor matapos ang aking pagkakulong, dalawang propesor ang nanguna sa nabigong pagkilos upang mabago ang desisyon ng administrasyon ni President Jose Cruz, S.J. Sila sina Dr. Vicente Valdepenas Jr. at Dr. Mary Racelis, na pinasasasalamat ko ngayon at hinahangaan sa matapat nilang paninindigan para sa academic freedom.

Dalawang administrador na Heswita naman ang nasasa aking gunita bilang mga pinunong akademiko na nakapag-iwan ng tatak sa aking propesyon. Si Fr. Nicholas Kunkel, S.J., ang dekanong tumanggap sa akin bilang instruktor noong 1960. Isa siyang dayuhan na may tapat na paggalang sa talino ng Filipino at pagkilala sa mga adhikaing makabayan ng mga gurong nasa ilalim ng kanyang administrasyon. Siya, sa palagay ko, ang taghasik ng mga unang progresibong binhi na nagbukas sa Ateneo sa mga pagbabagong dala ng Dekada 60. Hindi masalitang tao si Fr. John F. Doherty, S.J. subalit kanyang gabay ang nagturo sa akin ng interdisiplinaryong lapit sa pagbasa sa panitikang Filipino, na pagkalabas ko sa Ateneo ay siyang landas na tutuntunin ko bilang kritiko at iskolar. Una muna, inimbitahan niya akong magsuri sa mga akdang Filipino para magteorya tungkol sa pagkataong Filipino para sa isang komperensya ng mga social science professors. At noong 1970, bilang Academic Vice President, siya ang nagpanukala ng isang Department of Philippine Studies, na siyang tugon ng Ateneo sa kahingian ng mga estudyante para sa Filipinisasyon. Ako ang kanyang pinaglatag ng bisyon at ginawang tagapangulo ng bagong sangay ng akademikong istruktura ng unibersidad. Hindi nagtagal ang buhay ng departamento dahil binuwag ito sa mga unang taon ng Martial Law nang ako ay nasa andergrawn. Kung linguin ko ngayon ang departamentong pinahawakan sa akin ni Fr. Doherty, iginuhit nito ang tatakbuhin ng aking karera bilang propesor ng Philippine Studies.

Sa mga personaheng nagkaroon ng permanenteng luklukan sa aking gunita at kalooban, si Rolando S. Tinio ang pangunahin. Siya ang nagdala sa akin kay Fr. Kunkel at kanya ang rekomendasyong nagpasok sa akin sa kaguruan ng unibersidad. Kanya ang talim ng isipan na humawan ng landas para sa patutunguhan ng aking pagiging guro ng panitikan. Kanya rin ang ningning ng imahinasyon na umakit sa aking pasukin ang daigdig ng teatro. At kanya rin ang lalim ng hilig sa musika na gumabay sa akin upang malulong at lubos-lubusang magmahal sa opera at teatrong musical. At di kasi, kanya rin ang galing sa paghawak ng Ingles at Tagalog bilang makata na nagtayo ng pamantayan para sa aking sariling paglikha. Habang siya ay nakaburol, inihalintulad ko si Rolando sa kaningningang kinailangan kong takasan upang mahanap ko ang sarili kong liwanag.

Tunay na mapalad ako na sa Ateneo nagsimula ang aking kasaysayan bilang guro ng panitikan. Ang mga itinuro kong batayang kurso sa tula, kwento, dula, sanaysay at retorika ay matibay na pundasyon na nagbigay sa akin ng tiwala sa sarili upang magpakadalubhasa sa panitikan at magsalita nang walang pagkasilong bilang manunulat at propesor. Ang Summer Institute of Philippine Literature noong 1965 ay okasyon na nagbigay sa akin ng pagkakataong magsaliksik at maglatag ng mga panimulang kuro-kuro tungkol sa panitikan ng Filipinas.

Limang panayam na binigkas ko sa nasabing summer institute ang nalathala sa librong *Brown Heritage, Essays on Philippine Cultural Tradition and Literature* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1966), at ang mga iyon ang naging susi sa pagpasok ko sa scholarly publishing. Taong 1967 nang tanggapin ng Indiana University ang aking disertasyong doktoral tungkol sa kasaysayan ng panulaang Tagalog, at noon ding taong iyon inilathala ng *Philippine Studies* ng Ateneo de Manila ang sentral na kabanata ng disertasyon na lumabas sa ilalim ng pamagat na “Florante at Laura and the Formalization of Tradition in Tagalog Poetry.” Nalathala bilang aklat ang buong disertasyon noong 1986 bilang *Tagalog Poetry, 1570-1898, Tradition and Influences in Its Development*, na inilimbag ng Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Naging mabunga ang panahong inilagi ko sa Ateneo de Manila, at iyan ay dahilan kung bakit nagtumibay ang buhol ng ugnay ko sa unibersidad na ito. Bilang pagsasara sa yugto ng aking pagkatiwalag sa Ateneo noong 1975, mahalagang banggitin na isang institusyon mismo ng tradisyong relihiyoso ng mga Heswita ang pinag-ugatan ng aktibismong nagbunsod sa akin na maging “suwail.”

Panahon ng malaganap na popularidad ng “cursillo” nang ako'y mapasok sa “Days with the Lord.” Sa mga okasyon na sumali ako sa mga sesyon ng DWL, naging malapit ako sa mga estudyanteng naglilingkod bilang staff at sa mga partisipante sa mga aktibidad

ng retreat. Bilang isang gurong nasa staff, tumiim sa kalooban ko ang bisa ng pakikiisa sa mga kabataang naghahanap ng kahulugan sa kanilang pakikipagkapwa. Subalit sumapit ang aking pagsangkot sa DWL sa yugto na namalayan ko na ang pinaglilingkuran namin bilang staff ay mga kabataang ang problema kadalasan ay lantay na personal, gayong ang nakararami sa lipunan ay mga Filipino na ang pinuproblema ay ang kabuhayan at ang pagkakait ng uring naghahari sa lipunan ng paglingap sa mga dukha at pingsasamantalahan. Noon ako nagsimulang dumako sa panig ng nakararaming Filipino at makibahagi sa kanilang pagpupunyaging mabago ang kanilang panlipunang kalagayan. Sa madaling sabi, bisa pa rin ng pagiging Atenista ang naghatid sa akin sa kilusang pambansa demokrasya.

Kaya, paano ko kaya mapasasalamatang dakilang institusyon ito na tumanglaw sa aking kasaysayan hindi lamang bilang guro kundi bilang mamamayang Filipino na rin? Salamat, Ateneo de Manila, maraming salamat!

## THE ATENEO IN MY HISTORY AS A TEACHER OF LITERATURE

### Response to the Awarding Ceremony, 22 September 2006 Ateneo de Manila University

*Bienvenido Lumbera*

*Translated from Filipino by Charlie Samuya Veric*

When I was asked for a list of people that I would like to be my guests for this occasion, the memories of my ten-year stay at this university were awakened. The first to come to mind were the faces of students and fellow teachers. The places on campus and events. And the feelings and ideas that I had experienced being with colleagues that were my age, getting to know the students and the traditions of the university. With these memories came rushing that time in my life when I was still starting to teach and introduce myself as a professional outside the university.

I will name four of the student faces. First, there is Ferdinand Arceo who, in the language of activists, stuck it out with me to take me into the nationalist movement just when student radicals were beginning to enter the university. Perfecto "Boy" Martin was his companion, one of my activist students that, to this day, remains my comrade and friend. When the Martial Law had passed, Boy started a family and went to desktop publishing. Ferdie joined the NPA and, just when the Martial Law was suspended, was killed in an encounter. The great regret that I have for his aborted connection to my life will not be eased by the years.

Following the fates of the students that I had known at the Ateneo, I learned so much from the changes in the politics of Edgar Jopson. Because his political views differed from what I learned from the national democratic movement, I did not try to know him better when we were both on campus. When we met again during the Martial Law, the lesson that his life had taught me as a teacher was clear. I admired his integrity and devoted service to the nation. Edjop embraced the radical response to the dictatorship and sacrificed his life in the underground struggle.

The fourth student whose name begs to be remembered is Emmanuel Lacaba. He was my research assistant for a literature project, but we almost did not see each other because he was often in Banahaw. He arrived in the Ateneo after serving as an American Field Scholar, an Americanized teenager who wrote arcane poems in English. I thought to

myself that the time he had spent in America had left a permanent mark of hippie culture on his consciousness. But he had shown an incredible skill in discovering his Filipinoness. He joined the labor struggle and then went to the mountains of Davao as a Red Fighter. There, he continued to write poems in English, but its subject had become the experience of the nationalist guerilla.

I will not name the fifth student. He was an activist Atenean that rescued me when I entered the Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC) as a political detainee in 1974. He had been a political detainee accustomed to the prison culture, and he protected me during the first days of my captivity. I had known his intelligence and courage so that when he decided to be in the shadow of President Macapagal-Arroyo I felt a mix of defeat, disgust, and regret.

On the development of my mind while I taught at the Ateneo I must mention the effect of conversations with colleagues serving on the committees of which I was a member. Doreen Fernandez is the first among those that I should remember and thank. She was my student at the Ateneo Graduate School, a conscientious scholar and unassuming critic, yet fierce in distilling knowledge. I knew that hers were the words in the citation that heaped praise on her former teacher when yours truly was honored by the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation and when the Ateneo awarded me the Tanglaw ng Lahi.

When I could not return to the Ateneo as a Full Professor after my detention, two colleagues led the failed effort to change the decision of the administration of President Jose Cruz, S.J. They were Dr. Vicente Valdepenas, Jr. and Dr. Mary Racelis, whom I thank and admire for their steadfast position on academic freedom.

Two Jesuit administrators are on my mind as academic leaders that had left a mark on my profession. Fr. Nicholas Kunkel, S.J., the dean who admitted me as instructor in 1960. He was a foreigner with a true respect for the Filipino mind and understanding for the nationalist ideals of the teachers under his administration. He, I believe, had sown the first progressive seeds that had helped the Ateneo to embrace the changes brought by the 60s. Fr. John F. Doherty, S.J. was a man of few words, but his wisdom had taught me to read Filipino literature using an interdisciplinary lens, a perspective that I would pursue as a critic and scholar after leaving the Ateneo. First, he encouraged me to examine Filipino works and theorize Filipino personality for a conference of social scientists. And in 1970, as an Academic Vice President, he established the Department of Philippine Studies, the Ateneo's response to student demands for Filipinization. He chose me to express its vision and made me chair of the new division of the academic structure of the university. The department did not last long because it was disbanded during the first years of the Martial Law when I was underground. If I looked back at the department that Fr. Doherty

had made me lead, it would illustrate the paths of my career as a professor of Philippine Studies.

Of all the people who have carved out a permanent place in my memory and heart, Rolando Tinio stands foremost. He brought me to Fr. Kunkel and his recommendation secured my passage into the academic workforce of the university. His was the sharpness of mind that cleared the destinies that I would follow as a teacher of literature. His as well was the imaginative brilliance that attracted me to enter the theatrical world. And his also was the deep love of music that led me to want and completely love opera and musical theater. And indeed, his too was the mastery of using English and Tagalog as a poet that set the standard for my own work. When he was lying in repose, I likened Rolando to a brightness from which I needed to be escape in order to find my own light.

I am truly fortunate that my history as a teacher of literature began at the Ateneo. The basic courses in poetry, fiction, theater, essay, and rhetoric were the solid foundations that gave me the confidence to specialize in literature and speak bravely as a writer and professor. The Summer Institute of Philippine Literature in 1965 was an occasion that gave me the chance to investigate and formulate initial ideas about Philippine literature.

The five lectures that I had given at the summer institute were published in *Brown Heritage, Essays on Philippine Cultural Tradition and Literature* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1966), and they were the key to my entry into scholarly publishing. It was in 1967 when Indiana University accepted my doctoral dissertation on the history of Tagalog literature, and it was in that year that Philippine Studies had published the central chapter of my dissertation under the title of "Florante and Laura and the Formalization of Tradition in Tagalog Poetry." Ateneo de Manila University Press printed the whole dissertation as a book titled *Tagalog Poetry, 1570-1898, Tradition and Influences in its Development*.

The time that I had spent at the Ateneo de Manila was productive, and that was the reason why my ties to this university had been strengthened. To give closure to my separation from the Ateneo in 1975, it is important to say that that the roots of the activism that drove me to become "rebellious" run deep in the Jesuit religious tradition itself.

It was the heyday of "cursillo" when I entered the "Days with the Lord." During the times that I joined the DWL sessions, I became closer to the students serving as staff and retreat participants. As a teacher who was also a staff member, I came to understand the power of being with the young who had sought the truth by feeling for others. But it struck me that the problems of the students that we were serving in DWL were purely personal, while the majority of Filipinos tried to confront their lives and the ruling classes that stood

in the way of caring for the poor and weak. That was when I took the side of the majority and shared their aspiration to change their social condition. In short, it was ultimately the Atenean vision that led me to the national democratic struggle.

So, how can I possibly thank this great institution that enlightened my history not only as a teacher but also as a Filipino citizen? Thank you, Ateneo de Manila, thank you very much!