



Original PLAC: (Left to Right) Alfredo Navarro Salanga, Ricardo M. de Ungria, Eric Gamalinda, Alfred A. Yuson, Cirilo F. Bautista, Marne L. Kilates, Gémino H. Abad, and Felix Fojas.

INTENSITIES OF SIGNS:
AN INTERVIEW WITH THE VISIONARY
CIRILO F. BAUTISTA

Ronald Baytan

To say that Cirilo F. Bautista is a great writer is an understatement. It was January 1991 when as a literature major, I enrolled in the poetry class of the renowned Dr. Cirilo F. Bautista. He had a formal demeanor about him, and he commanded attention, respect, and awe from his students. This sense of awe at Cirilo's genius and strength of character would stay with me, even until the time I interviewed him in his home in



Cirilo F. Bautista at the Dumaguete workshop.



Original PLAC on a Cavite beach: (Top) Alfredo Navarro Salanga and Cirilo F. Bautista; (Bottom) Felix Fojas, Ricardo M. de Ungria, Alfred A. Yuson, and Gémino H. Abad.

Quezon City on February 28 this year. I had already been teaching for almost twenty years, but during the interview, I would still stare star struck, and Cirilo remained the same: the same composed intellectual with a serious mien, a commanding presence, a low confident voice, and a compelling sense of irony about the world and about himself. Only one thing had changed: his age. Born in 1941, he is now seventy-one years old, definitely older, white hair and all, a little weaker, but still prolific and undaunted by time like Tennyson's Ulysses.

To Cirilo, poetry is a sign, “a sign of signs,” a sign so intense that “it is always contemptuous of language, yet it is nothing without it.”¹ More than twenty years after, I can still remember quite vividly Bautista's first lesson. He wrote on the board his favorite line from Lawrence Perrine's *Sound and Sense*: poetry “as a kind of language that says *more* and says it *more intensely* than does ordinary language” (italics in the original).² Poetry, as intense language, demands an intractable imagination and an uncompromising dedication to the craft—and Cirilo has demonstrated nothing but this in his career as a writer.

It is not easy to devote one's life to poetry, an art considered by many to be impractical and financially unrewarding. Coming from a poor family, Bautista worked as a newspaper boy and bootblack when he was still young; he worked as a checker at the University of Santo Tomas to support himself through college. But he did not disappoint himself and his family. He was

a consistent honor student from grade school to graduate school (fourth honor at Legarda Elementary School in 1954; class valedictorian at Mapa High School in 1958; BA English, magna cum laude, from UST in 1963; MA Literature, magna cum laude, from Saint Louis University in 1968). He eventually received his DA in Language and Literature from De La Salle University in 1990.

Despite Bautista's achievements, his masterpiece, *The Trilogy of Saint Lazarus*—especially its last installment, *Sunlight on Broken Stones*—remains understudied. This provided the opening of our interview. The questions centered on his poetry, especially the *Trilogy*, but I was also interested in his other literary pursuits: fiction, creative nonfiction, translation, and criticism. I also wanted to ask him about specific works, the craft of writing, and his teaching career.

In Cirilo Bautista's universe, Man (or Woman) is an infinitesimal being wrestling with language to articulate what cannot be articulated and to unearth what history has buried in the "boneyard of memory." Through the paradox of pentametric lines, the incandescence of irony, and the majesty of metaphors, Bautista has woven together the stories that we make up and make us up, the stories of our solitude and grace as a people.

Aside from poetry, Cirilo F. Bautista writes fiction and nonfiction. His fiction (*Stories* and *Galaw ng Asoge*) is quite philosophical. In the short stories, the narrators are thinkers pondering the nature of existence. In the novel, the writer is having an intellectual feast with his use of metafictional devices. His essays, mostly from his weekly columns in *Panorama* and compiled as *The House of True Desire* (2010), are by turns lyrical and ironic, informative and earnest. The commanding voice—the firmness of the "I"—is ever present. So are the unmistakable grasp of the language and the pleasures of the intellect which are a hallmark of the creative universe of Bautista.

Early on in Bautista's career, he had already established himself as an extraordinary poet, a fact which both Nick Joaquin and Jose Garcia Villa acknowledged. In his introduction to *The Cave and Other Poems* (1968), Nick Joaquin had this to say: "This is a young poet who demands attention and patience from the reader but who rewards a close reading with a wealth of imagery, with more gradual revelations." In Bautista's books, one often finds this blurb from Villa, a quote from his letter to Cirilo: "Already, you write like a Master: with genius in language and genius of imagination."

Difficult, dense, cerebral—these are perhaps the words that best describe the poetry of Bautista. His earliest collection, *The Cave and Other Poems*



Palanca Awards Night: (Left to Right) Cirilo F. Bautista, Gémino H. Abad, Ricardo M. de Ungria, and Alfred A. Yuson.

(1968), is a good introduction to Bautista's poetry because it contains the seeds of his poetics—the lyrical sweep, the distrust of language, the sonic preoccupations, the formal experiments, and the cerebral density. His second collection, *Charts* (1973), exemplifies the modernist Bautista in such lyrics as “A Man Falls to His Death” and “A Manner of Looking.” The formal experiments are balanced, however, by tender lyrics like “Pedagogic” and “The Sea Cannot Touch.” *Boneyard Breaking* (1992), his third collection, marks the beginning of a poetry that is more grounded in Philippine realities and politics (and this will find full thematic and technical exploration in *Sunlight on Broken Stones*, 1999). What I find central to *Boneyard Breaking* are “Poems from a European Journey.” This cycle of poems explores the postcolonial poet's consciousness as an Other. Even “The Fourteen Stations of the Cross,” with its juxtaposition of Eastern and non-Christian epigraphs with the Christian myth, deserves critical scrutiny.

Believe and Betray (2006), his latest poetry collection, stands out from the rest because, while retaining the intellectual rigor and technical sophistication

of the previous collections, its language is surprisingly not dense; it is not as difficult a read as the earlier work. It demonstrates, I surmise, a poetics no longer tempered by the demands, nor haunted by the opacity, of modernism. The foremost critic of Bautista's poetry, the late Dr. Ophelia Alcantara Dimalanta, rightfully summarizes Bautista's achievements as a poet:

Believe and Betray is primarily about beliefs, betrayals, chances, certainties, believing, being betrayed, where the poet speaks loudly of poetry as act of self-liberation only to expose its illusory promise.³

Reading Bautista is reading Larkin, Lowell, Auden, Ashberry, Heaney, and more in the sense that his poetry, finally, has the robustness, the integrity, the authority, and the historical sense of these masters' oeuvres. The poet's audacity and flexibility of form is predicated on the conviction that depth of wisdom, force of passion, profundity of insight, or whatever it is that distinguishes art from mere craft invariably demands certain appropriate formal maneuverings. This explains the rich literary fare offered by the book, the variety of literary strategies employed to match the massive range and diversity of topics, subjects, and insights covered. Simply astounding.⁴

To understand Bautista's epic trilogy, it is important that one has read his lyrics. It is a known fact that many of Bautista's lyrics have actually appeared in the trilogy. Ricardo de Ungria has discussed this strategy or "recycling,"⁵ which reinforces quite clearly the modernist poetics of Bautista. The sonic repetitions, the conscious attempt at intertextuality, the self-referentiality, and the fragmentation and multiplication of poetic selves/worlds in Bautista's poetry—all of these lead to the ultimate poetic technique of collage and the poet's bold claim that he has written only one poem, that is, his entire body of work: "All my poems are one poem."⁶

Bautista's modernism, however, is tempered by a deep sense of poetry's social function: to serve the nation. As a sign of the times and "[a]n artifact of culture, the poem ... revitalizes the national pride or awakens the nation's moribund aspirations. It has now been conscripted into the service of the national soul..."⁷ This faith in poetry finds concrete embodiment in *The Trilogy of Saint Lazarus* (2001), Bautista's retelling of Philippine history.

The Archipelago (1970), the first epic in the *Trilogy*, focuses on the beginnings of colonization with Magellan's "discovery" of the islands and untimely death to Legaspi's building of Manila to the trial of Rizal. Thus, to tell Manila's story, Bautista uses three major characters—Magellan (the Bearer of Consciousness), Legaspi (the Lighter of Consciousness), and Rizal

(the Eye of Consciousness). Bautista's chronicle is not conventional in terms of technique, not quite linear in terms of plot, not quite based only on facts. In certain sections, he had to invent events.⁸ Unlike the later two epics, *The Archipelago* is more playful in terms of form; some of its sections struggle to break out of the page whereas the stanza patterns in *Telex Moon* and *Sunlight on Broken Stones* are more steady and regular.

Telex Moon (1991), the second epic in the *Trilogy*, is an extended rumination on Manila of the past and of the twentieth century with Rizal as its central intelligence. Like the previous epic, it is concerned with the inner life of the characters. The epic's structure is clear: Parts I and III showcase Rizal on the psychic/spiritual plane or "astral plane" (to use Bautista's words)⁹ while Part II explores Rizal's life in Dapitan. "Telex" (telephone exchange) figures in Part III where, according to Bautista, the poet through Rizal laments the country's degeneration into materialism which the "telex," a modern innovation, obviously symbolizes.¹⁰ The poem is composed of exactly 3,000 lines, and each of its three main parts/movements contains ten sections/subparts; each section consists of one hundred lines in twenty-five quatrains with a pentameter pattern. What is most evident in this epic is its emphasis on sonic effects. To cite an example from Part I:

The sex of telex brings the grex an ax,
tells exactly the factly lack of lex
though in electric stockrooms it is rex;
its shocky hair that shakes the air mirific¹¹

On the complexity of the epic, Ophelia A. Dimalanta avers:

The ambiguities [in *Telex Moon*] then stem from an Eliotic penchant for heaped-up allusions, a Stevensian preference for unfamiliar and odd words, truly unusual and impenetrable in a single isolated context, undecipherable unless the reader submits to the wily and almost inaccessible conditions of the poem, ambiguities (still the poet's privilege, really) which are, however, made more bewildering if not altogether exasperating by the poet's conscious display of word-power in the incessant alliterative play, in the witchery of his jugglery, his calendrics and flummery and alphabetic itches stumping and stupefying, and really, for what?¹²

Eliot and Stevens—together with Pound, Auden, and Frost—appear in the interview as Bautista's acknowledged influences. With Eliot, Stevens, and Pound in Bautista's schema, it is no wonder then that the *Trilogy* is an intellectual challenge. Indeed, with all the verbal gymnastics, what then and

what for? The answer, Dimalanta states, is the poet's "momentary power over his medium."¹³ To extend the argument further, the work is a testament to a postcolonial poet's struggle with language, a language whose possession he is constantly enacting because he knows only too well that possession is only a phantasm, a fleeting achievement. This postcolonial dimension in Bautista's work is explored briefly in the interview. As a critic himself, Bautista knows theory well, but criticism is not something that he would have pursued had he not ended up as a professor of literature. Bautista is not a nativist poet or critic. He understands the futility of searching for lost origins, or of going back to our supposed old essential self. To Bautista, language per se is not the problem of writers—how they wield it *is*.

The last epic of the *Trilogy* and winner of the 1998 Centennial Literary Prize for the Epic in English, *Sunlight on Broken Stones* (1999), takes a look at more recent times, exploring the struggle of the Filipino people from multiple perspectives, investigating the consciousness of the poet, the heroes and villains, and other unnamed subjects and objects (like the gun)—Ferdinand Marcos, Gringo Honasan, Imelda Marcos, and Cory Aquino, to name a few—thereby giving us a composite picture of the deplorable state our country has succumbed to and its possibilities for redemption. In terms of form, *Sunlight* is composed of thirty-two sections; with the exception of the framing sections (the last being a repetition/rewriting of the first in more relaxed, loose five lines), each section is composed of one hundred hendecasyllabic lines of twenty quintets in a predominantly iambic measure. The epic begins with a tone of despair: "regret," "blight," "burn," "lost," "stolen," "wound," and "dark sign dark age," but ends with "faith," "thoughtful," "live," "keep eternal," "embrace," and "Bright sign Bright age." The ending is a gesture, an impassioned call toward that vision of a changed Philippine nation. In the interview, even if the answers may be found in the epic itself, I asked Bautista how and why he steered the poem toward this hopeful ending.

It is sad to note that no scholar has yet conducted an in-depth study of *Sunlight*. Even reviews of this work are scant. I asked Bautista how he felt about it. Since the *Trilogy* can truly benefit from a postcolonial study, I also asked Bautista about his recreation of the colonial world: why Magellan, Legaspi, and Rizal are the main subjects of *The Archipelago*. In assigning Magellan the role of "Bearer of Consciousness," what does he aim to achieve? "Written in Stratford-upon-Avon"—Bautista's nationalistic poem about the legacy of the English language and the paradoxes of our postcolonial realities—is recycled in section 20 of *Sunlight*. I had to ask Bautista about his thoughts on the lyric.

On the matter of poetics, we must not forget how Bautista has foregrounded the sonic dimensions of poetry in the *Trilogy*. After all, as he once said, poetry as “verbal music” is a “tribute to the imagination’s ego.”¹⁴ I included music as one of our key topics in the interview. The rhapsodic heights and lyricism of *Telex Moon* merit critical attention. I had to ask: Why the obsession with music?

My interview’s modest aim is to serve as a re-introduction to Bautista and his views about art and society. It is best to read it side by side with the previous interviews conducted by Monina A. Mercado, Ricardo de Ungria, Yolanda T. Escobal, and David Jonathan Y. Bayot.¹⁵ I did not ask Bautista too many questions about his life as a critic/semiotician nor about his poetry in Tagalog/Filipino precisely because these topics had already been adequately covered by Bayot and Escobal, respectively. A small difference, perhaps, from earlier interviews has accrued simply from the passage of time—Bautista is now speaking decades after those interviews, seven years after he had actually published his *first* poem: the *Trilogy* and *Believe and Betray*. Naturally, a section of the interview finds Bautista talking about his latest poetry project whose theme is something that he would not have considered writing about, or concentrating on, in his youth.

The *Trilogy* ends with the line, “Bright sign Bright age,” a perfect ending for all the good things a visionary poet wishes for his sad but beloved country. I titled the interview “Intensities of Signs” because of the flagship poem in *Believe and Betray*, “The Intensity of Things,” which contains the phrase “believe and betray”; because Bautista’s poetry is as intense a language as his faith in poetry and in his country. To him, poetry “epitomizes people’s highest aesthetic verbalization of social realities. Its linguistic configurations attempt to capture the human condition at its evanescent point.”¹⁶ Bautista would always bewail the deplorable state of our nation, but in equal measure or perhaps more so, he would always emphasize its chances of achieving redemption, its potential for greatness. Bautista trusts in the restorative power of Poetry, its wisdom, its sacredness. After all, through the years, Bautista has always believed in the inextricable bond between language and identity, between poetry and the nation:

But whatever poetry in English we will have in the future, say a hundred years from now, it must contain the Filipino soul, the Filipino consciousness, with the bones of our history and our arts in it, a poetry which, though written in English, is the only possible poetic expression of the Filipino identity.¹⁷

An Interview with Dr. Cirilo F. Bautista*

Ronald Baytan: Ricardo de Ungria states, “It is a minor tragedy for the trilogy that it has remained unread—or if read, little understood—by the very people whose ideas of race and history should have been helped had the song and the verses made for them been less perplexing and recondite. As it is, the epic remains the supreme exemplar of high modernism in our poetry.”¹⁸ How do you feel about this?

Cirilo F. Bautista: Criticism isn’t a primary pursuit in our country; it’s chiefly an academic subject. The *Trilogy* was an intellectual pursuit for me. I was writing for some imagined reader who would have the capacity to look at our country’s history and assess its future. Nobody in this country becomes popular because of literary works. We are read by a few people. That’s enough for me. It’s saddening, but that’s the reality.

RB: Albert B. Casuga once asked, “Who is afraid of Cirilo Bautista?”¹⁹ My understanding is that you wrote the *Trilogy* for intellectuals. Is that right?

CFB: No, I have in mind an intelligent, educated reader; in that sense, you already have a readership; your world becomes difficult only for those who do not belong to that readership. We need readers who have some critical training; they would see the *point* of the poem or story. When you write a poem, you try to raise the ante.

RB: In your interview with Monina Mercado, you said the true test of poetry is in the reading: “The evaluation of a poet depends on his being heard.”²⁰ You stressed there poetry’s sonic element. Could you elaborate?

CFB: At some stage in my writing, I was very much influenced by my readings and studies of the romantics: T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens. Their romanticism is in their use of language. You can be very modern in your thoughts, but you might not be in the way you express them. The kind of poet that I liked in the 1970s was Ricaredo Demetillo; how he spoke in his poems was very romantic. Since poetry is a kind of performance in reading, it may have certain qualities that will attract the reader’s auditory sensibilities. Before anything else, language is sound and poetry is sound. When I write, I try to please the readers with the sounds of my words; what I want to tell them will come later. Outright, when you are impressed with a

* Interview transcribed by Peter Paul R. Pichler and Ronald Baytan.

poem, isn't it the sound that impresses you first and not what is said? Later, the thought will strike you, and then you say: *Oh, this is what he wants to say.*

RB: I think your second epic, *Telex Moon*, is the most lyrical.

CFB: That's true. I was drunk with sound. The words were used more for their sound than for anything else. Because—you know why?—because it's Rizal speaking. Rizal is a first-class romantic.

RB: So that was central to the creation of his character, the persona?

CFB: If it can harmonize with that, why not? Take Robert Frost, W. H. Auden, Wallace Stevens. It's the sound of his poetry that captivates you with Stevens; otherwise, you don't get his ideas. He's probably one of the most philosophical poets that you have. And yet, why is he read? Because of the melliflousness of his language that attracts you first, and then you are pulled into his thoughts; you meditate on his poem. Afterwards, you'll say, "Now I understand this poem."

RB: You also like using internal rhyme and alliteration.

CFB: That's all part of the sound system, part of the poet's arsenal. The outer rhymes are the most popular, the most obvious. Some poets may move away from the relative ease of the outer rhymes by going inside. Take Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"—it's full of inner rhymes. He said poetry is the rhythmical creation of meaning.

RB: I think in terms of form, the most radical and experimental of your *Trilogy* was the first, *The Archipelago*. The second and the third had more standard stanzaic forms.

CFB: When I was writing *The Archipelago*, I never thought, *I'm going to write using a different form. I'm going to experiment.* I don't think you say that to yourself when you write. You just write! Then things happen, then you continue what's happening, then all of a sudden it's finished, and you have written an experimental poem. I thought I was just writing the kind of poem I would like to write, and since it was a long poem, I tried to use several ways of saying things. That probably accounts for the experimentation, the form: narrative, dramatic, and lyric. I was aware that was a violation of the epic character. I said: "I don't like the way the epic sounds. It's so boring—a very long poem with a definite meter. I want to have a poem that has excitement, that has drama." So I mixed the various kinds of poetry: narrative, dramatic, lyric.

RB: *The Archipelago* zeroed in on Magellan, Rizal, and Legaspi. Rizal is, of course, a given but why Magellan and Legaspi?

CFB: I've always said my epic is a history of the Filipino consciousness. When Magellan came to this country, everything opened up ... we became conscious of who we were, and so we fought. The intellectual journey of the Filipinos began. Because Magellan was a foreigner, we don't pay attention to his impact on how our consciousness as Filipinos began.

RB: You say then that Magellan is "the bearer of consciousness"?

CFB: There is that kind of thing. I recall a Victorian epic, *The Torch-Bearers* [by Alfred Noyes]. That's my Magellan, a bringer of light: intellectual openness, intellectual adventure. We cannot have a culture, a society, a consciousness that's progressive without intellectual advancement. That's why Rizal got somewhere because of the power of his words.

RB: You assert that in *Words and Battlefields: A Theoria on the Poem*. Are you also questioning the binaries of colonial master/colonial subject, oppressor/oppressed, as to say colonialism has good and bad effects?

CFB: Yes. It's all a matter of standpoint. Besides, binaries are just academic terms, heuristic, to make analysis clearer. Look, we are a mixture of bad and good people running around the country. You walk around the streets, do you see the binaries? No, it all boils down to people and what they do, how they live.

RB: You said in an essay²¹ that, in recreating the Spanish colonial world, you were not as interested in the actual physical place as in the psychological realities of your personae. How did you go about the construction of Magellan's and Legaspi's character?

CFB: By reading all I could read of our history,²² including secondary sources. I went to various libraries and many seminars. In 1969, when I was in Iowa, I had not yet finished *The Archipelago*; I found William Carlos Williams's epic, *Paterson*. It seemed he was doing the same thing I was doing, using the same techniques I had used; for instance, the side quotations, historical or otherwise. I said: *My God, if people have read this guy's work, they would I say I copied him*. But I had already written mine, you see, so there must be a similar kind of self-conscious technique among people writing long works. Other epics I've read, like *The Torch-bearers* and the Spanish epics, have similar techniques and methodologies, bringing out just one simple

thing: the progress of the minds of people. It's only the degree in which this thing is brought out that differs.

RB: In recreating the colonial world, you also had to invent certain details.²³ What made you decide which to invent and which to extract from certain sources?

CFB: One portion is largely historical. I retained what I could not change. I changed only those parts where there are probabilities capable of being incorporated. I used Aristotle's theory of probability. If it can be acceptable, why not? It may be true, after all. Some historical things, other historical characters, I abandoned because they would not have worked with the system that I was thinking of. In the end, you are left with materials you think are necessary for you to accomplish your job. You work within such parameters.

RB: So that explains why Rizal is central in your work: Rizal, the evolved consciousness.

CFB: He is our hero. There was nobody else as great as he was—a colonial hero.

RB: It's difficult to write about Rizal since so much has already been written about him. How did you take on that challenge?

CFB: I focused on something else. Imagine Rizal in a country where everything happening is affecting him, how would he react? That is my epic.

RB: Rizal then on the psychological plane?

CFB: On all levels, because he is the persona that we cannot find any substitute for. He is the number one person able to experience those things.

RB: So this explains also the closure? Because he appears again at the end of the epic trilogy.

CFB: Yes, that's just technical closure. You'll notice in the epic, the beginning and the ending lines are the same. If I were very nationalistic, I would probably have used Bonifacio; I love him, but I could not find anybody better than Rizal. He was thrust into the events of his time. Every historical thing followed him. He made history, as we say.

RB: Why does your sequel, *Telex Moon*, end with slashes?

CFB: It was a concession to the highly technological character of our present time. When we see Rizal there, he is speaking from a higher plane, looking at what has happened and what is happening. The slashes signify partly a closure and partly a continuation. Everything is like that; history does not end.

RB: In terms of form, in both *The Archipelago* and *The Telex Moon*, you used a lot of epigraphs. Did you also aim to question whatever you were quoting?

CFB: It's a common technique by way of setting the atmosphere, the historical situation, without any need to speak about them in the epics themselves. But there would be somewhere in the main text a critical interrogation with the person speaking.

RB: Ricardo de Ungria states that you recycle in your first two epics many passages and lyric poems from *Charts*.²⁴ Many sections in *Sunlight on Broken Stones* also appear in *Boneyard Breaking* and *Believe and Betray*. What is the *raison d'être*, your poetic vision, for the intertextuality, for the "consanguin[ity]," as Marjorie Evasco puts it?²⁵

CFB: All my life I have just been writing one poem: all my verses. Why can't I not use them again if the situation demands it? There is also a psychological explanation. For me, there is no time. One can go into the future, the past, the present, just like that. So, this cross-usage of text from one work into another, I consider as my mind jumping from one time to another, trying to make sense of those two different periods for the purpose of a present situation. I knew what I was doing there. I would choose those parts in the corpus of my works when they were very useful for my purpose. Sometimes I pair them; sometimes I cut or add to them.

RB: How do you connect those parts from different contexts?

CFB: That's creative again because you have to come up with something new. A plus B = C. Very hard to come up with C. It's not just transposition. It's trans-creation.

RB: De Ungria said you were poking fun at your critics and readers; he also said that the crossovers comprise a collage where the discrete parts of one work are looking for coherence.²⁶ This is one aspect of modernist poetics.

CFB: I liked what de Ungria said about me laughing at my critics. I knew the crossovers would catch my critics' attention because nobody was doing it then. If somebody else were to do that, I would probably say he was copying himself. But I had a purpose.

RB: You once said that the printed text "seals the lips."²⁷ Thus, I thought the recycling was a way of approximating the chanting quality of the epic. It allowed you to create a polyphony of voices.

CFB: I have always dreamt of having that epic, especially the dramatic portion, performed. I have ideas how the trial of Rizal should be performed. I would add not only polyphony, but a number of actions from three perspectives: narrative, drama, and lyric.

RB: In section 20 of *Sunlight on Broken Stones*, you combined "Bonifacio in a Prospect of Bones" and "Written in Stratford-upon-Avon," thus creating two voices. That added to the work's complexity, but using multiple voices can also create problems; the reader will have to decipher who is speaking, and the poet has to ensure that the characters are carefully delineated.

CFB: You're right. The ideal poem for me is one where the voices speaking are not questioned because they're easily understood, and because the identity of whose voice it is, is also clear. That's what I'm trying to do with the poems I'm writing now.

RB: The first of your trilogy, *The Archipelago*, is the most difficult. *Sunlight* is cerebral but quite easy to follow.

CFB: Yes, that first part usually gives you problems. The epic is like that. But the second [*Télex Moon*]—you should have heard Peque Gallaga read the work. *Sayang*, I was not able to ask him to record it. You will then catch the sound patterns.

RB: There are experimental parts in *Sunlight*; for instance, the catalogues in section 18. What is the source or origin of this section?

CFB: Various sources, usually newspapers. There was a time I ran out of things to say, so I said to myself, *What can I get from the newspaper today?* I read the business section and looked for nice-sounding phrases which I then quoted. That's the radical thing there; I was after the sound of those phrases.

RB: Section 21 is also all quotations. *Sunlight on Broken Stones* has a more or less regular meter. You showcase the nation's despair, but at the end,

you counter the “dark age” with “bright age” and “burn the records” becomes “keep eternal.” On the level of technique, how did you steer the poem in that direction?

CFB: By the promise of Rizal’s work. He eventually sided with the revolutionists. That’s part of what they found in the piece of paper in his shoes. Revolution! That’s why there is this great foreshadowing of sunlight coming into the country. Sunlight, sunlight, sunlight. Our culture is all broken stones. Now there is sunlight on those broken stones. So there is that kind of promise, the correction.

RB: Why did you choose to write three books?

CFB: I thought three books would be very suitable for the poem that I was imagining. The number of books has no serious significance.

RB: So, until the very end, it’s all about Rizal. I also liked the line, “The more I love this country, the more I cannot die.”

CFB: Rizal has already done his part. There’s the promise that things may be better if our people follow what Rizal is trying to tell us. By the way, one other thing [about *Sunlight on Broken Stones*] is that the gun speaks there and says things about our country. I enjoyed writing that because it’s difficult.

RB: *Sunlight* is heavily about the Marcosian years. What is your take on the politics of Ferdinand Marcos and Cory Aquino?

CFB: Marcos took advantage of his position; Cory was a unifying person, and her son won because of her. That’s our image of them. The only problem is the people. Somebody should write an epic about the people of this country. I’ve already answered what our leaders are like, and why. But our people, what are we like, and why? Everybody has taught us what to do. Why can’t we change and become better? Why are we not progressing?

RB: In your interview with David Jonathan Bayot, you mentioned Cory’s lack of policy on the arts.²⁸

CFB: That’s the best thing that the Marcos regime gave us: the patronage of art. What have Aquino, Ramos, Estrada, and Arroyo done? In Cory’s time, other pressing problems called for more attention than art. Sad, but that is so.

RB: I found your cycle “Poems from a European Journey” interesting, especially the closure in “The Fountains of Villa D’Este,” a technique also evident in the epic.

CFB: It's a concession to the epic form. The epic has to have a beginning, or invocation, then the main body, and finally an envoi, which is the ending. Such are the formal conventions in European epics.

RB: The late Dr. Ophelia Dimalanta says that Stevensian and Eliotic elements in your poetry account for its modernist tendencies.²⁹ How actually have Eliot and Stevens influenced you?

CFB: In college we were reading them. When I first read Stevens, I couldn't understand him, but I liked how his poems sounded, the way his lines moved and created some kind of music that addressed a certain aspect of my being. Stevens has his own philosophy of poetry that he lectures on in his poems. T. S. Eliot is easier for me than Stevens. He is more of a dramatist who believes in the punch line and leaves you there shocked, displeased, or pleased, depending on what he wants to get from you as an effect. Ezra Pound, too, who is more difficult, has influenced me. I hardly understood much of Ezra, aside from his small poems which are entirely in English. *The Cantos* is very obscure. I doubt if even he himself understood them. He writes in different languages; if you don't know those languages, how can you follow? I also like Robert Frost. These are the two extreme influences on me: the simple and the complex writers. Frost is a genius in simplicity of manner. He makes everything easy for you to understand, even where his matter is complex. His meters are almost always perfect; the rhymes, almost always perfect. And there's W. H. Auden, a little bit different from Frost because he tends to philosophize in a social way. All the other poets I read—whether I liked them or not—affected me; the Beat Poets—Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso—when I was in Iowa, they were the ones dominating the literary scene.

RB: Your early works, including “The Cave,” were philosophical.³⁰ May I know why?

CFB: I was reading a lot of philosophy then at Saint Louis University. The priests were quite good at philosophy, and some of them were my teachers. By nature, I am philosophical. By nature, I am serious and I want to be alone. What I read had some impact on the work I did—it was as if I was trying to see the philosophical aspects in the subjects that I wrote about. That's why people found my earlier poems difficult. “The Cave” itself is one long philosophical dissertation on human development. I was reading anthropological psychology then. But I also have humorous poems in *The*

Cave and Other Poems. If you keep writing only serious poems, you will go crazy.

RB: In “The Fourteen Stations of the Cross,” were your references to Eastern philosophy deliberate?

CFB: When I lived in Baguio, I was reading a lot of Western and, even more, Eastern philosophy—*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the Zen Buddhists, etc. I even studied yoga; in the 1970s it was an in-thing. My wife and I turned vegetarian. I enjoyed writing “Fourteen Stations” as a dramatized narrative, even though I suffered through it. I was telling myself, *These are my stations*.

RB: There was a theoretical disjunct between the sacred Western myth and the Eastern philosophy you put in. I thought you as a postcolonial writer were countering or appropriating a Western myth.

CFB: When I wrote it, I never thought of it that way. I just wanted to write something after the model of my own religion. In the 1970s, my family would go to Zambales to spend the Holy Week there and a month of summer vacation. But I labored through the poem and finished it, and I was satisfied with it. When I used those Eastern references, it was not really a homage to, or offense against, any philosophy or religion, but simply because I was exposed to them in my readings. It’s one thing you learn in philosophy: All religions are alike.

RB: “Pedagogic” is a favorite among teachers. Was it based on your experience as a teacher?

CFB: Yes. I easily wrote it because I was writing about something that I knew. But I don’t know anymore what inspired me to write that. It may be that I saw teachers in my time who did not know what they were doing, so I wrote something to criticize them.

RB: Many of your books are dedicated to Rose Marie. May I know why?

CFB: All of them. Almost all of them. She’s the only wife I have. Why should I not dedicate them to her [laughs]? In the beginning, we used to quarrel a lot. She’s also an artist. She was born in August; I in July. These are two astrological signs that shouldn’t marry. Rosemarie couldn’t understand why I wrote more than take care of the children, and so on. Later, she realized that some adjustments had to be done and just supported me. That’s why I

said to myself, *If she could have that kind of sacrifice ... I would dedicate my works to her.* I couldn't leave her; I wouldn't leave her. The writers' wives are unknown people; they are unheard of, but they are doing so much for literature.³¹ They encourage their own husbands to do what they want to do.

RB: The distrust of language, the wrestling with language—these are evident in your early work like “Addressed to Himself.”

CFB: It's a true picture of the artist. Dylan Thomas has the same view, “In My Craft or Sullen Art.” It's always a struggle. In my case, writing humorous poems balances my philosophical seriousness.

RB: Apart from “Written in Stratford-upon-Avon,” are there other pieces that you really love or are proud of?

CFB: I like all the poems that I have written, but if I were to give you a rating offhand—I would like to read “The Cave” in a poetry reading. I also enjoyed the long poem, *Sunlight on Broken Stones*. It is just one poem that I wrote in a kind of uninterrupted, energetic outpouring; it was as if somebody was writing it for me—until it was finished.

RB: Your poem, “Written in Stratford-upon-Avon,” is also a discourse on language. What's your take on English? Dr. Abad and others would say that we have actually claimed English.

CFB: I agree with that. I get very angry with people who ask, “Why do you write in English? Why don't you write in the national language?” What national language do you mean? Tagalog? It's not a national language. We cannot return to Tagalog anymore. We can create a literature in English because English is now ours.

RB: So, given this historical reality, what is the poet's task?

CFB: To write as best as he can. A writer must write in any language he is familiar with. I'm not saying that English is the best language for poetry nor that one should write in English or Tagalog or Kapampangan. No, that's a choice the writer makes—he chooses it, and he should do his best. As Oscar Wilde said, you can write literature for religion's sake, for politics, for sociology. What does it matter for as long as it's literature? As long as you write poetry, I don't care what language you use.

RB: So it's the craft that matters.

CFB: Yes. You cannot separate craft from language. You cannot have one without the other. It's all about form and content.

RB: As a bilingual poet, you wrote more poems in English than in Tagalog. Your epic is in English. May I know why?

CFB: I still write in Tagalog; it was my first choice. In college, I wrote in Tagalog. But the situation then affected my choice of language. The issue of national language was still volatile. There was no such thing as studying Pilipino or Tagalog. I wanted to write, but writing and literature then came under AB and MA English. So I was forced to shift my attention from Tagalog to English. My writing in Tagalog became less and less until I found myself not writing in Tagalog for so many years. I have only three books of poetry in Tagalog [*Sugat ng Salita*, *Kirot ng Kataga*, and *Tinik sa Dila*]; my English works are more dominant. I wanted that to be reversed, and so, later on, I wrote my novel in Tagalog.

RB: The titles of your Tagalog poetry collections are obviously about language: “kataga,” “salita,” and “dila.” But your Tagalog poetry is different from your English in terms of tone and technique, though at times they are both ironic. What accounts for the difference?

CFB: The difference lies in the language. The language carries with it all the traditions of poetry, techniques, history, special armaments. They are already all in the language. So when I write in English, that's one set of those things. When I write in Tagalog, that will be another set. My feelings will be affected by those elements in one or the other language. That's why I don't write the same subjects in Tagalog that I write about in English. Most of my Tagalog poems are about social things—relationships of people, my family, society. That's because to me Tagalog is the more suitable language for those social commentaries.

RB: Why would that be?

CFB: Well, because the Tagalog language rises from a history of oppression and deprivation; it is a language that is always revolting [against something]. Up to now we are revolting. English is more intellectual in the sense that it arrived to us already polished by the Americans. So in those cases where the writer is bilingual or trilingual, he also assumes a bilingual and trilingual personality because of the differences in language.

RB: Which of your Tagalog poems do you like best, or would like to be remembered for?

CFB: “Panulat.” “Sugat ng Salita” is also often anthologized. “Banal na Pasyon ayon Kay Simeon, Aktibista” is I think the longest poem. That’s my favorite.

RB: Would you say Hernandez and Abadilla have influenced your Tagalog poetry?

CFB: I am in sympathy with Amado V. Hernandez; with Abadilla, no. You can easily see somebody who is influenced by Abadilla; it’s like being influenced by Jose Garcia Villa. It’s all about form. I have more affinity with Hernandez because I identify with what he writes about: the poor, society’s problems, and so on. I can understand Hernandez’s work very well. *Pareho kami ng Tagalog niyan e*. His Tagalog is no different from mine. That probably makes my translations of his poems a little bit easier.

RB: How has your trip to Europe or abroad changed you as a poet—the way you write, the way you think as a poet?

CFB: Probably how I think, but not the way I write. How I write is already inscribed in me. The way I think about how I write and how I think about other people writing, these may change. When I’m in another country, I’m amazed by its progress and riches, and I start lamenting my own country’s state. I think of what’s happening to my own people. I wrote about that in “Written in Stratford-upon-Avon.” Differences in culture, differences in language, differences in models—they can have effects on the writer’s way of thinking. But craft is another matter.

RB: In “Written in Stratford-upon-Avon,” you talk about the dual heritage of English—English as a gift and as a curse—and then end with the image of a puppet. Apart from the poem’s nationalistic angle, why did you choose the puppet [“strings pulling my bones”]?

CFB: There I criticize their commercializing of Shakespeare. Is English culture also one of commercialism, something that has escaped Shakespearean tragedy? The title, “Written in Stratford-upon-Avon,” stresses that point.

RB: You also translated the work of National Artist Amado V. Hernandez. Could you comment on translation and your work, *Bullets and Roses*?³²

CFB: Probably the most difficult kind of creation is translation because there nothing is definite. Translation, as the Italians say, is a kind of betrayal [*Traduttore, traditore*]. You cannot be truly faithful to the work you're translating. Two people translating the same thing will come up with two different translations. Translation is unnecessary except as a last resort.

The most basic problem in translating a poem is getting into the head of whoever is speaking. You have to pretend you are that person, adapt yourself to him. Not only to his environment but also his manner of speaking, the language that he is using. You really have to be a linguist.

RB: What difficulties did you encounter translating Hernandez?

CFB: Finding the right English word or expression for the Tagalog word that we use. In one instance, I wasn't sure whether I had succeeded. He used one word whose definition I have not yet found. I asked people around. It was probably a misprint but there were no notes about it anywhere. You are sort of disgusted by that kind of failure on your part when you are not even sure that you are wrong. Tagalog and English are two different languages, especially in terms of structure. Tagalog is polysyllabic, English monosyllabic.

RB: Do you also consider the audience for whom you are writing the translation?

CFB: As in poetry, you write for yourself, or an ideal reader.

RB: Your first book of fiction was in English [*Stories*]. Was there any problem writing your novel in Filipino?

CFB: No, not really, because we're bilingual. Filipinos have no problem with shifting from one language to another. You don't say, *I'm going to write in Tagalog, what should I think?* No, just write. That is one argument against all those people speaking about the national language. If you want to write in that language, write in it! You don't have to impose that language on people. A good writer writes in his best language, and his best language is what he has mastered.

RB: May I know if you have already finished writing the *Asoge* trilogy?

CFB: The second part is almost finished, but sometimes you get bogged down. If only you could write so many things at the same time! Now I'm more concerned with my poetry because that's what's keeping me productive.

I've already written eleven poems this February alone. For me that's a record. Sometimes it takes me years to finish one poem. But I have eleven! There was even a time when I wrote two poems in one day, one after the other! You feel good when you're satisfied with what you've written. I'm dating the poems in my notebook; I'm putting it all down, the historical significations. Scholars will see, between two poems, how long it took me to write the second poem. If I can finish a hundred poems, I will publish the work. Ten poems a month—that's my target. All these new poems will constitute my second poem; they're so different from my earlier ones because I'm trying to marry prose and poetry in such a way that the product will become more poetry than prose.

RB: What's that new collection about?

CFB: It's autobiographical, about me as an old man, my view of the world, how I look at things now, my feelings: a lot of irony, and hopelessness, and pain. Those are the things you experience in old age. But a lot of hope, too.

RB: Literature is about hope in the end.

CFB: I have very few poems on God, on theology. I hardly touch on such matters. I write mostly about man because I know man. But about the other things, God alone can write them.

RB: You once said that poetry is a "monkey on your back."³³ So, how different is writing fiction from writing poetry?

CFB: I enjoy writing fiction because you know where you're going. You can have an outline, the beginning, middle, and end determined before you even write. With poetry it's not like that. You can have all these ideas, but you may find yourself writing about something else. That is my experience with poetry. Poetry pleases me very much because of the *intensity of the experience* there. When I finish a poem, I'm so happy because all my anxiety is gone.

In short stories, we are more in control than in poetry. Prose is easier because you can plan things and just slack off if you cannot finish it. In poetry, however, sometimes you have to wait for the poem to finish itself. The story does not finish itself, but poetry sometimes will do it for you—to your surprise, all of a sudden, it's finished.

RB: So you already have the ending of the *Asoge* trilogy?

CFB: Yes, I know its ending. That's why it's easy for me to go back to it. The only thing I don't like about fiction is its length. To finish a novel, you have to work on it every day. Every time you write, you have to go back to what you have written. I take my hat off to fictionists. Imagine how much labor they put into their work! I understood that with my first novel.

RB: Who are the fictionists you admire and emulate?

CFB: Most of them are detective fictionists. One of the latest is the author [Stieg Larsson] of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. There are, of course, the great classic detective writers like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. For non-detective fiction, there are so many writers. Anything that impresses me, makes me feel good after reading, affects and influences me. Borges, yes! He was my idol. Neruda, I admire. Everything we read becomes a part of our literary consciousness.

RB: Another matter—how different from poetry and fiction is the writing of nonfiction?

CFB: Not much different from writing any kind of prose. You can experiment with the form of nonfiction, or essay, in so many ways, and I enjoyed doing that with my columns for *Panorama*. Short, crisp, and you may say, humorous pieces that criticize whatever matter you want to criticize. "Creative nonfiction," so called, is also mostly autobiographical.

RB: You are also a painter. You talked about it in "The Poet as Painter: Pages from a Notebook."³⁴

CFB: What I really wanted [to take up] in college was Fine Arts but the tuition in that course was very high, so I went to Literature. But that didn't stop my liking for painting. I would associate with painters in UST, see painting exhibitions, study painting on my own. My wife who knows paintings also taught me the rudiments of color and composition. But nobody really taught me how to paint. Painting is a very good armament for literary writers. Painting and poetry run parallel in many ways. They use each other's language because they share so many terms in common: surface tension, color combination, harmony, unity, and so on.

RB: About criticism, how different is it from creative writing?

CFB: It's an entirely different kind of pursuit because you are not really "creating." You are examining and justifying certain texts. That involves a

knowledge of things quite different from the knowledge of poetry, or of fiction, but knowledge nonetheless that can contribute to the greatness of our country's literature. We need good critical schools to help our literature and the other arts advance. We don't have that yet. It's most difficult for me to write criticism. It is as if I have to change everything—change my language, my thinking, my way of looking at things. I can't imagine myself being a critic. Of course, as a writer, you have this or that kind of critical activity, but not the kind of criticism in academe. I probably wouldn't have written critical works. In fact, they were written because of the demand by the academic world.

RB: But you did semiotics.

CFB: The heyday of that kind of criticism in Europe and America was in the 1960s and 1970s. I was so lucky to have met people who were really into it: George Steiner, Paul Engle (our director in Iowa), and critics from schools like UP and UST. In a group of poets, there will always be critics. The poets themselves are their own critics. That's the first outside step you take. If you want to be a good writer, be a critic as well. And if you develop that in an intense manner, then you will become a professional critic.

RB: In your interview with Ricardo de Ungria, you said our critics "have not yet earned the kind of respect that they should get as critics."³⁵ Have our critics made progress since 1977?

CFB: There is always progress. You have more people involved in serious criticism now than before because they have learned from the West.

RB: What about developing our own theory?

CFB: It will come if it develops, for you can't force it. Just like our national language: if everybody speaks Tagalog, then that's our national language. You can have so many kinds of critical schools, but the most dominant one will still be the one that is progressive and acceptable.

RB: So much of our literature hasn't been studied yet, even the works of canonical writers.

CFB: Because there is a lack of critical energy. No encouragement either for criticism. Well, there's really not much encouragement in this country when it comes to literature. It's all just talk.

RB: What can you say about the new genres and new forms that have come out?

CFB: That's unavoidable. Literature and technology are connected. However, how far can you go with blogs? Blogs are nothing else but undisciplined essays. Sometimes a blogger doesn't know anything about writing. Aside from the site, all he has is a computer. The bloggers, like the critics, must patrol their ranks, create something good, teach their members how to write properly, make them write about serious things. In poetry, you have the *Textula*, *Textanaga*, simple things that may help.

RB: Realist texts are privileged in our canon. What can you say about that?

CFB: It's natural in our case. It's like that anywhere else. You have all kinds of ideologies—literature being also a form of propaganda. These ideologists would like to advance their causes. Nothing wrong with that, but whatever literature becomes dominant, that's our literature.

RB: What about your Thomasian heritage? The late Ophelia Dimalanta asked whether "Thomasian writing" exists.³⁶

CFB: It's always arbitrary. But there are things to lean on to define "Thomasian writing." First, a writing that reflects the teachings of St. Thomas. Next, what of St. Thomas's heritage to Filipinos in the course of history is reflected in literature? So then what makes a text Thomasian? Apart from all these, you have to talk about the technicalities of the writer's poetry or fiction.

RB: How has UST influenced your own writing?

CFB: I was studying in UST when I began writing. My formal start as writer was in the classrooms at UST. My degree was AB English. We had three units only in Pilipino. The only school offering AB Pilipino or Tagalog was the National Teachers' College; probably UP also.

RB: How was your life as teacher? After Saint Louis, you went to La Salle where you retired.

CFB: I also taught for one year at UST and another year at Saint Louis. When you are a young teacher, you try to look for a school that would more or less make you feel at home, wouldn't you? I went to La Salle in 1969, and I liked what the American Brothers were doing. They were liberal, more open,

more honest. You knew what you were getting into. They tell you, *This is our ranking here. This is the kind of salary you will get.* I figured that if I stayed on, I would get the kind of money that was decent for me to retire on. It was the best then, and also the highest-paying school. We had a small group of writers, too, like Brother Andrew and Albert Casuga.

RB: La Salle had created an environment conducive to writing.

CFB: In 1970, Bro. Andrew returned from the States and eventually became our Vice President for Academic Affairs. At that time, when I had a poem published in, say, the *Free Press*, Brother Andrew would write me a note saying, *I read your poem, and I liked these lines.* Your Vice President telling you he read your poetry! He would do that for many years; when the pressure of work became too great, he would talk to you over the phone and send you books to read.

RB: You also helped found the Bienvenido N. Santos Creative Writing Center in the 1991. Let's go back to your poetics. How much of your work is autobiographical?

CFB: All of it. Always, there is something of you in whatever you write.

RB: The criticism of your work has mostly been on the techniques, not so much on its politics. May I know your thoughts about the Philippine nation?

CFB: I say very little about that except in the epics. Politics is the last of my priorities. Always at the back of my mind, there is that kind of doubt about the verities of our political institutions.

RB: Is Philippine literature developing as it should?

CFB: It is developing, but how it should is something else. Still, the writer's problem is simply to write. Is much writing going on now? Are we producing more or not?

RB: What can you say about our young writers now?

CFB: The writers now in our universities are doing all right. In UP, a number of writers are capable of contributing to the progress of our literature. As always, UP writing is the top-rank among academic places. UST has the 400-title project. Some young writers are very good. I was reading *Likhaan*, and I found some nice poems there—and an essay by Eugene Evasco. He is very good in Tagalog.

RB: By way of concluding, why is your latest lyric collection titled *Believe and Betray*?

CFB: Because that's what we do: we believe; we betray. Not believe and betray as one. We believe; we betray. That's how we survive. We believe things, and others we betray. You betray your fellow men, your principles, probably even yourself. When you believe yourself, you betray others. It's one or the other. When these two cannot be separate anymore, you believe in order to betray. This is human life. We are all like that. Paradox. Irony.

RB: The main tropes in your body of work. Do you already have a title for your upcoming collection?

CFB: *Wala pa*. It will come when it does. That collection will have different voices, many personae, from the perspective of an old man. I finished one poem about my guardian angel; before, I would never write about that. Then, of course, there's love, betrayal, the human aspects of survival and existence.

RB: If there's one lesson you wish to impart to young writers about poetry, what would it be?

CFB: I always say: Poetry is not about things as they are, but about things as they are imagined. One must know the distinction between prose and poetry. Prose is about how things are. Poetry is about how things are seen, imagined, or perceived. There's some kind of change in you when you try to shift from prose to poetry because each one has its own appropriate materials, systems, and techniques.

Poetry is difficult because you don't know when you'll finish it. Almost every time, finishing a book is a way of rejoicing about the mysterious quality of creative writing, much more than what people compare it to: having a baby. Having a baby is tractable. You can see it from beginning to end; you can prepare before, during, and after the baby. In poetry, you cannot. It's just there when it's there, when it is finished. How to arrive there in a rational, intellectual, artistic way, is the system that we call poetry writing.

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5. De Ungria, "The Winged Minotaur: (Notes on) Experimentation in Poetry," *Likhaan: Journal of Creative Writing* 9 (2009): 203–205.
6. Alfred A. Yuson, "Triumph of an Epic," *Observer* 21 (6 Dec. 1980): 29–30, rpt. in *Reading Cirilo F. Bautista*, ed. Isagani R. Cruz and David Jonathan Bayot (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1995), 253.
7. Bautista, *Words and Battlefield*, 89.
8. Bautista, "Manila: A Poetic Vision," *Likha* 11.2 (1990): 1–16, rpt. in Cruz and Bayot, 43–57. "I invented," says Bautista, "the Diaries of Limahong, Juan de Salcedo, and Guido de Lavezares; in this manner I evolved the itinerary of Rizal in England, Spain, and Germany ..." (45).
9. Bautista, "Manila: A Poetic Vision," 48. Bautista also states: "The physical Rizal in *The Archipelago* becomes the mental Rizal in *Telex Moon*: he is now the brain of the organism, he is now the Conscience of Intramuros" (48).
10. Bautista, "Manila: A Poetic Vision," 52.
11. Bautista, *Telex Moon*, I.VII. 601–604.
12. Dimalanta, "The Poet's Solitary Journey from *The Archipelago* on to *Telex Moon*," Cruz and Bayot, 245. This essay originally appeared as two separate chapters, "The Archipelago: Vision Objectified" and "On To Telex Moon," in Dimalanta's *The Philippine Poetic* (Manila: Colegio de San Juan de Letran, 1976), 147–165 and 167–172.
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17. Bautista, "Philippine Poetry in English: Some Notes for Exploration," *Solidarity* 5.12 (Dec. 1970): 72.
18. De Ungria, "The Winged Minotaur: (Notes on) Experimentation in Poetry," 196.
19. This is the title of Casuga's article on Bautista's poetry. Casuga, "Who's Afraid of Cirilo F. Bautista?" *Home Life* 20.10 (1973): 31–32, 39, rpt. in Cruz and Bayot, 199–203.
20. Mercado, 63.
21. Bautista, "Manila: A Poetic Vision," 45–48.
22. Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* and Fr. Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga's *Historia de las Islas Philipinas* are quoted a number of times in *The Archipelago*. Leon Ma. Guerrero's *The First Filipino* appears in the epigraphs of the three sections of *Telex Moon*.
23. Bautista, "Manila: A Poetic Vision," 45.
24. De Ungria, "The Winged Minotaur: (Notes on) Experimentations in Poetry," 203–205.
25. "Bautista's long works, the poems of epic length and purpose, are consanguineous with his relatively shorter lyric poems," says Marjorie M. Evasco in her introduction ("A Lyric Sense of History") to Cirilo F. Bautista's *Believe and Betray: New and Collected Poems*, xxii.
26. De Ungria, "The Winged Minotaur: (Notes on) Experimentations in Poetry," 202–205.
27. "The technology of print not only exiles the poem to the page but seals the lips in the reading of it," says Bautista in *Words and Battlefield*, 113.
28. Bayot, "Breaking the Sign: An Interview with Cirilo F. Bautista," 115.
29. Dimalanta, "The Poet's Solitary Journey," 245.
30. See Carlos M. Canilao, "The Reordered Reality in *The Cave and Other Poems*," *St. Louis University Research Journal* 3.3-4 (1972): 472–554, rpt. as "The Reordered Reality in *The Cave*" in Cruz and Bayot, 129–190.
31. See *The Writers' Wives*, ed. Narita M. Gonzalez (Pasig: Anvil, 2000), particularly 25–29 for "Joy Bank," Rose Marie J. Bautista's essay on Cirilo F. Bautista.
32. Bautista translated selected poems by Hernandez in *Bullets and Roses: The Poetry of Amado V. Hernandez, a Bilingual Edition* with Bautista's critical introduction.
33. This remark appears in the interview with Monina Mercado: "As I said before, writing poetry is for love, sheer love. It is, in fact, a monkey on one's back. But it is there and one has to live with it, if not off it" (69).
34. In *Likha* 7 (1984): 1–7, rpt. in Cruz and Bayot, 25–31.
35. De Ungria, "Cirilo F. Bautista: Mapping the Fjords of the Skull," 74.
36. In "Thomasian Writing: Reality or Myth," *The Ophelia A. Dimalanta Reader, Selected Prose*, 32–37.