

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

---

## **The Formal is Political: Revaluating Edith L. Tiempo**

Charlie Samuya Veric

*Philippine Studies* vol. 51, no. 2 (2003): 256–283

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>  
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

## The Formal is Political: Revaluating Edith L. Tiempo

Charlie Samuya Veric

*The question of form in Philippine literary criticism has been generally perceived as inimical to the question of content. In this work, Edith L. Tiempo's place in Philippine poetry in English is revaluated so that the productive unity of form and content is revealed. The essay argues that Tiempo gestures toward the framing of the question of form as, ultimately, a political problem. Thus, the promise of Tiempo as a poet and critic cannot be subsumed completely under the paradigm of what is known as New Criticism. New light is shed on the theory of the country's preeminent woman poet in order to reclaim her poetics from the violence of reductive reading.*

KEYWORDS: Edith L. Tiempo, theory of Philippine poetry in English, form and content, revaluation

Nearly five decades after her inclusion in Leonard Casper's *Six Filipino Poets* (1954)<sup>1</sup> and shortly before she was declared as the country's first woman National Artist for Literature, poet, fictionist, and critic Edith L. Tiempo acquired solid perpetuity with the publication of *An Edith Tiempo Reader* (Abad et al. 1999). The reader is published by the University of the Philippines Press and includes introductory essays from the country's literary superstars such as Gémino H. Abad, Isagani R. Cruz, Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo, Alfred Yuson, and Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz. The blurb itself announces Tiempo's eminence. Tiempo, the praise goes, is irrefutably a distinguished writer of Philippine literature whose work is necessarily emblematic of the most exemplary the Philippine literary

canon can offer. Abad gladly declares elsewhere, for example, that Tiempo's devotion to letters has produced works that "are among our finest, in fiction, poetry, and literary criticism" (Abad 1993, ii). Observe Abad's act of claiming and his effort to name Tiempo's literary corpus as indubitably constitutive of Philippine literature and, rightfully, of its tradition. Tiempo's labors are ours, Abad would say, the souvenirs of our country's collective unconscious and, suitably, its very dream.

Alas, the American New Critic Leonard Casper is betrayed. It must be remembered that Casper's introduction to the landmark anthology *Six Filipino Poets* announces that the poems gathered in the book, including Tiempo's, are without countries. "These poems," Casper (1954, xvii) reveals, "have no nationality; their allegiance is to literature, that is, to the advent of truth." With Abad's pronouncement after Casper, however, literature finally returns to the truth of its country, its nationality. The poems are therefore inseparable from the truths of their origin and from their origin's loyalties. Following Abad's logic, the country embraces, accordingly, all of Tiempo's labors. To designate Tiempo to her country is unquestionably a necessary act because she signifies for Abad the rupture and at the same time the continuity of Philippine poetic tradition in English. Tiempo, therefore, is fittingly the enduring symbol of the poet as both survivor and vanquisher of eras experiencing critical interregnum. "It remained to poets," Abad writes, "who persevered beyond the fifties to create that native clearing within English where the same language could not play false with the Filipino's sense of his own world" (Abad 1993, i). No other poet best typifies Abad's statement than Tiempo herself whose life as a writer and critic has influenced in many tangible ways generations of writers. Abad correctly acknowledges that Tiempo is the force "behind a tradition in writing that to the present invigorates Philippine letters in English" (ibid., ii). Yuson for his part professes Tiempo's luminous authority. "We become," Yuson (1999, 124) admits, "as certain as she is when we commune with her creativity, assured as we are by the strength of the symbiotic strand she weaves between finesse and the tough tack."

One is bound to ask therefore where Tiempo draws her power that tenderly compels present writers to seek communion with her sense of the creative. To such a question one is certain to find the answer in,

precisely, Tiempo's sense of the creative, in her idea of what constitutes the creative act and consequently its product. Certainly part of Tiempo's lasting power stems from her consummate gift to articulate the logic of her creative process and to elaborate on the operations as well as on the questions that attend the performance of such an act. The poet as Tiempo is thus resplendent because of her intimacy with Tiempo as critic. In an interview in 1997, Tiempo makes evident the strategic relationship between criticism and writing. "Those who have taken a course in the history of criticism," she states, "or who have been steeped in classical studies are very fortunate, because they have a firmer grasp of how to write and are more open to seeing why some things don't work" (Tiempo 1997, 14). According to Tiempo, those that are uninitiated will always resist criticism "since they do not see the origin of the remark. They might even suspect that it [is] a personal bias on the part of the critic." Tiempo (*ibid.*, 14–15) continues:

I like to think of these literary principles as the bridges between the writer *and* the reader. They are the common passages through which both can communicate. Otherwise, if you take away those literary principles, where is the bridge? I mean, how is a reader to approach a writer? The writer may build bridges, but he will be building bridges in the sky because they will never reach the reader, who seems unable to grasp the way towards the bridge offered by the writer. The critics point out the bridges.

Clearly there is for Tiempo an occasion for the mutual illumination of both the writer and reader. This critical is the site of criticism itself. It is in criticism where the encounter between the writer and reader becomes more meaningful and comprehensible. The world of the writer fades into the world of the reader within the greater, more encompassing sphere of what Tiempo calls literary principles. In Tiempo's sense of things, the writer and reader, discrete or fused, are not enough to complete the creative experience. Between the writer and reader there exists an essential bond, a bridge, to use Tiempo's own loving metaphor, which criticism provides and makes possible. To comprehend Tiempo's poetic process is, therefore, to grasp Tiempo's own poetics. Certainly, one must grapple with Tiempo's specific notion of

poetry's ontological and epistemic constitution in order to understand the grammar that frames Tiempo's sense of poetry and poetic imagination. This feat inevitably serves what Tiempo herself requires of reading in order to illumine not only the creative act and its product, but also, and more significantly, the interpretive procedure itself. This ultimately fulfills poetry's function—the dialectical unity between writer and reader, reading and writing in the infinite possibility of criticism and critical cognition.

Ostensibly, such a performance demands the return to and, if necessary, the revaluation of Tiempo's critical corpus. It must be clarified, however, that this project claims neither uniqueness nor originality. There is, for instance, the essay by Maria Elena Barreto-Chow (1989, 255–82) that outlines the trajectory of Tiempo's definition of poetry from 1950 to 1986.<sup>2</sup> Barreto-Chow differentiates between the early and late critical productions of Tiempo and argues that, "Tiempo's later works reveal that her poetics has undergone a kind of growth." "These later works," Barreto-Chow argues, "offer proof of Tiempo's willingness to begin widening her perspective of the genre, to take into consideration certain forms left unaccounted for in the poetic criteria she espouses and to relax, to some extent, the firmness with which these norms are adhered to and applied." Moreover, Barreto-Chow perceives in Tiempo's later critical productions the tendency to address what may be called "extrinsic" questions in relation to Philippine literature. "There is, in all this," remarks Barreto-Chow, "the beginnings of a crucial acknowledgement of the need for flexibility; and appreciation for the undeniable influences exerted by *context* on the nature of a work of genre" (ibid., 280). If one reads closely Barreto-Chow's pronouncements, one discerns the suggestion that Tiempo's poetics is by and large impervious to the call of "extrinsic" considerations; that Tiempo's poetic theory is organically resistant to the perceived impurity of the question of context. Nevertheless, Barreto-Chow concedes that this defiance falters sometimes. Rare are the moments that Tiempo's idea of poetry, according to Barreto-Chow, allows the persistence of milieu to exist within the ambit of Tiempo's theory of poetry. According to Barreto-Chow, these moments reveal themselves, however sporadically, in Tiempo's poetics of late. "It must be made clear, however," Barreto-

Chow cautions, "that this acknowledgement [of context] is not 'full-blown'; the widening of perspective is still in the process of being achieved" (*ibid.*). It is obvious that Barreto-Chow considers Tiempo as profoundly New Critical whose awareness of the problem of context is merely a crack in the prison-house of Tiempo's so-called New Critical poetics. More problematic is Barreto-Chow's suggestion that Tiempo's recognition of "extrinsic" matters is a novel process begun by Tiempo only in her recent critical yield. While it is true that Tiempo operates within the rules of New Criticism, it is unwarranted to identify Tiempo from the outset as totally beholden to New Critical principles, held hostage and unsuspecting in her deployment of New Critical idiom, given thoughtlessly to the maddening cult of form.

Critic Isagani R. Cruz (1999, 239–52) warns specifically against this facile interpretation of Tiempo as purely New Critical. "Together with her husband Edilberto in the fifties," Cruz remarks, "Tiempo adapted the New Criticism they learned in American Universities to the peculiar circumstances of the Filipino writer. She, in particular, approached the American critical paradigm with a characteristic skepticism, easily unmasking the hidden assumptions and values that younger American Structuralists would take another generation to discover" (*ibid.*, 239). Boldly, Cruz asserts the unspoken radical project of the Tiempos in their use of New Criticism that, in due time, undermines the same New Critical tenets that they vow to uphold. By introducing the American New Critical language to Philippine writers with a critical difference, the Tiempos, Cruz contends, locate themselves "firmly within the dominant tradition of socially conscious and politically subversive Philippine literature established by Francisco Balagtas and Jose Rizal" (*ibid.*, 240). For Cruz, this feat of utter sublimation owes its existence to the Tiempos' formulation of a distinct literary theory "blending both the reading strengths of the American New Critics and the thematic preoccupation of Filipino writers" (*ibid.*, 240). In Cruz's assessment, the female Tiempo is especially admirable for constantly using "her key words within the context of Philippine critical tradition" (*ibid.*, 246) and for insisting on the inspired harmony between form and content, thought and expression. Thus, to accuse Tiempo of political irrelevance because of her "formalist" tendency is, to use Cruz's words, a matter

of immense intellectual sloppiness. For if one examines carefully Tiempo's position, one realizes, says Cruz, that Tiempo "had articulated the Maoist principle of the twin criteria of politics and art long before Filipino critics were introduced to the works of Mao Zedong" (*ibid.*, 244). "Not only does she confront, in her essays, our own contemporary critical issues, but she reminds us, through her solid foundation in both foreign and Filipino critical traditions, that there has been no actual radical shift in the way we read and think about literature" (*ibid.*, 250). Accordingly, Cruz concludes that "[f]rom Rizal to Tiempo is not, therefore, such a big leap in time and sensibility. In fact, it looks very much, from our post-theory standpoint, that Tiempo actually continues the critical thinking process started by Rizal" (*ibid.*, 249).

### **The Critical New Critical**

Indeed one senses in Tiempo the critical potential to see through, and even beyond, the concepts that she herself deploys. Tiempo has the unquestionable ability to view from a distance the mechanism of a theory and consider how her own creative process gets entangled and untangles itself, eventually, from the snare of such a notion. When asked, for instance, about her sense of tradition, Tiempo responds that the New Critical tradition, with which she is much associated, is in truth an old hat. "What we call New Criticism," Tiempo explains, "is really not new criticism. It's really old criticism, which we can trace back very sharply to the classics." "Whatever principles we cling to as New Critics," adds Tiempo (1997, 13), "the ancients have already expounded on. For instance, organic unity." Aristotle, Tiempo clarifies properly, has a whole tract on the idea of the organic whole. Interestingly enough, one recognizes in Tiempo, even in her most New Critical moment, such propensity to dilute the imagined purity of the theory she is utilizing. Such tendency is already evident in Tiempo's (1948, 24–26) acknowledged first essay on the poetic method. The short essay is an exegesis of the metaphor's function in the poetic form. Tiempo argues in the article that metaphors "are not for decorative purposes, nor even primarily to express the concept." Metaphors, Tiempo proceeds, "are not really directed to facilitate a simple expression; rather,

they are bound up in the poem's execution." The ultimate basis, then, for judging the soundness of a poem, its poetic integrity, is for Tiempo directly related to "the success of the execution as manifested by the accomplished structure" (*ibid.*, 24).

A cursory examination of this essay generates the impression that Tiempo is out to advertise New Critical precepts especially those concerning the alleged primacy of textual autonomy. "[T]he poem," Tiempo proposes, "should stand on its own—proving itself, conveying its meaning by itself, relying on no pre-knowledge of background or other extraneous material to make itself fully understood" (*ibid.*). This declaration, however, must be read against what it intends to say but does not. Otherwise, one is certain to believe that Tiempo here is inflexible with regard to her perceived fidelity to the full autonomy of the text. There is no need for what Tiempo calls extraneous materials to comprehend the poem's concept, its actual content as it were, because the execution itself carries the concept, makes the concept appear in another form. Content becomes intelligible as metaphor. One must add here that Tiempo's concern is the production of meaning; a production that reading initiates. For the poem to become successful, the form itself must capture the spirit of that which is represented so that the poem's meaning becomes decipherable. This possibility is inherent precisely because the poetic representation is faithful to the idea of that which is represented. Tiempo declares the invalidity of background or what she calls the extraneous material to the act of reading because the successful form itself is the context. In the realm of form that succeeds, the extrinsic in other words is the intrinsic. As Tiempo says, metaphors "are used to prove the concept through the structure of the poem" (*ibid.*). Fittingly, one does not have to read, say, tomes about the history of Manila in order to comprehend a poem about the place because the text itself is the distillation of all that is essentially historical about the city. This effect is achieved, as Tiempo makes plain, without necessarily dismissing the "extrinsic" component of the text. The form therefore is just the other countenance of the content. And in doing so, "the thought as imparted gains a singularity through the means and manner of presentation." "Thus," Tiempo concludes, "in the criticism of the poem, the thought is dependent on structure and its expres-



sion" (ibid.). In this manner Tiempo destabilizes, as early as 1948, the authority of New Criticism by deploying its own principles according to the necessities of the writer's context. Tiempo seemingly surrenders to New Critical concepts but her acquiescence does not mean she sacrifices her power to form the language in her own image. By desiring to make New Criticism what it is not as it exists in her specific milieu, she decides to shape it after her imagining and imagining of the world. It appears that Tiempo as critic and poet desires, in the beginning of her vocation as a language-maker, to master the logic of theory and make it fulfill her ends, and not the other way around.

Tiempo's definition of poetry's function becomes more understandable in the light of her discussion of Amando Unite's poem, "Manhood in the House at Cabildo."<sup>3</sup> Tiempo attempts to analyze the handling and selection of metaphors in Unite's poem in order to demonstrate how the execution conveys the poem's thought. The poem has many merits, Tiempo observes. Among them is the poem's casual diction "serving somehow to give the effect of understatement or evasion—which intensifies the experience, rather than diminishes it." Apart from this, Tiempo also detects the poem's fine evasion of activity, "its remarkable passivity, very well wrought." The strong points, however, are spoiled because of the weakness of the metaphors that Unite utilizes. "The main fault of the poem lies, I think, in the conventional choice of metaphors, and also in the fact that the author achieves a weak unity by the use of parallel devices. His choice and use of metaphors are too 'pat' with the situation he presents." The use for example of "window" as the eyes of the mind is rather conventional, says Tiempo, and the image of the "door," which parallels that of the "house," is trite. Because of this failure, the poet does not succeed "to prove what he says" (ibid., 25–26).

Again, Tiempo illustrates here the indispensable symbiosis between thought and expression, form and content. Earlier, for example, Tiempo makes an hermeneutic interpretation of the poem and suggests that the "theme of the poem is manifestly the moral and physical decline of a man living in the city, in a place called Cabildo, where he is haunted by the specter of his lost vigor. And also implied (quite clearly in the last line) is the debilitating effect of the city" (ibid., 25).

Tiempo's decoding leads us to the understanding of an individual's alienation from his own vigor in a city that consumes his human energies, leaving his body, his manhood, ruined and ravished in the city's enveloping death and drought. It is without a doubt that the promise of Tiempo's reading is a profoundly political one. The existence of an individual becomes meaningless because the world in which he dwells is a place of death and desiccation. The fate of the persona in Unite's poem exemplifies the modern condition of the alienated individual. Thus, it can be said that Tiempo's reading of form and its function gestures toward the realization of a deeply political value. Tiempo's evocation of the unity of form and content is, thus, a political act. The poem's potential to achieve this profoundly political illumination is undermined, however, by its failure to marry the exigencies of form and content. Tiempo is able to recognize the political content, but the poem fails to assert suitably the presence of the political as an *idea*, in the Platonic sense of the term. "He merely *states* a situation, without proving its existence in the structure of the poem. There should be," Tiempo counsels, "a unified impression of his old vigorous entity forcing itself and mingling with his sick entity" (*ibid.*, 26). Tiempo's proposition regarding the full revelation of the necessary struggle between living and dying is a strong dialectical contention that acknowledges the primacy of the will to outlive and overcome the pull of capitulation. The poem, however, does not reveal this struggle which is ultimately its central idea and, essentially, its redemption. That is why, in Tiempo's eyes, Unite's poem fails because it lacks the necessities of an integral representation of content as form. In the end, Tiempo finds in Unite's poem the absence of coherence between the necessity of content and the necessity of form. This potential to distinguish the insight that results from an inspired realization of the absolute unity between form and content is what Tiempo (1956, 103–9) develops in another work on the nature of poetry. See:

Literature is a necessary expression of both head and heart. Poetry, especially, is a concentrated expression of the thoughts and feelings that have most shaken and agitated man in all ages. In spite of the professed aloofness of some people to poetry, it is inevitably a part of man, as much a part of his nature as the food he eats and the

air he breathes. For contrary to the opinion of many, poetry does not deal only with some dreamy never-never land of flowers and moonlight and music, and beautiful maidens pining away in desolate gardens. Poetry deals with the *whole* of man, with his physiological nature, his secular nature, as well as religious nature. Anything at all that concerns man is material for poetry. Some of the greatest poetry has not been about the murmuring pines and the hemlocks, but about such issues as slavery, child labor, the rights of man, abuses by the clergy, and the separation of church and state. (Ibid., 103)

Tiempo establishes here an understanding of poetry that she takes up in the future. Witness how she defines literature first as an expressive form that encapsulates intellect and intuition, head and heart. The dialectic of intellection and the process of intuition are a central matter for Tiempo. Such dialectic is directly related to her notion of poetry. By defining poetry as a "concentrated expression," as opposed to literature's "necessary expression," Tiempo makes unambiguous the core function of structure that determines the ultimate success of all poetic expression. Literature, thus, has a pedagogical function. This is clear to Tiempo. But Tiempo reiterates that poetry as literature must be a well-wrought form for it to serve its professed end, which is the necessarily pedagogical. In Tiempo's exegesis, it is obvious that she does not separate intellect from intuition and stresses instead their absolute unity in the production of a poetic form. Necessarily, poetry's subject embraces both the lofty and the ordinary. "Anything at all that concerns man is material for poetry" (ibid.). Tiempo (1948, 24) echoes this idea in her foundational essay on poetry where she declares, "all thoughts are qualifiable for expression in modern poetry." In asserting the libertarian nature of poetry, Tiempo affirms the libertarian potential of the specific brand of poeticizing that she espouses. Poetry, then, becomes the site of the possible even for those whose very possibility is threatened with the specter of vanishing. Such an ideation is crucial especially at a time when the Filipino writer begins to master the language and attempts to form it in his own image. Once more, Tiempo reveals her capacity to anticipate the possibilities within the bounds of the theory she utilizes. And what can be more democratic than imagining the oneness of the mind and the body in the production of poetry? By unit-

ing the head and the heart in order to make possible the existence of a poem, Tiempo reveals the strength of her Romantic spirit. This temper will realize itself as a fount of power for Tiempo. Interestingly enough, Tiempo's fundamental declaration that poetry includes and combines the body, mind, and spirit—the physiological, the secular, and the metaphysical—grows more strategic against what she discerns as the poet's ethical responsibility. "The view that a poet tries to maintain is a view of the whole, an undeceived, comprehensive view of the unity in the midst of multiplicity, the bright coherence over the grey diversity" (Tiempo 1956, 104).

It must be noted that Tiempo does not diminish the potential of diversity; what she encourages is the capacity to seize the final coherence that springs from a play of difference. As Tiempo elucidates, a poet does not want "to be fooled into mistaking a part for the whole; he does not shut out the bad aspects, but insists on understanding them, on assimilating them and coming to terms with them, the better to grapple with them" (*ibid.*). There is, therefore, a good understanding of the productive capacity of antagonism in Tiempo—the promise to restore order where order appears as a moment of loss, the potential to confront and deal with dissonance. Tiempo comprehends hence the necessity for a poet to envision a poetry that redeems. "It remains for the poet then," states Tiempo, "to concoct his so-called obscure poetry, to use other formula. It remains for him to rephrase those vital truths that have been forgotten, to use seemingly cryptic language in order to force the reader's mind to concentrate once more upon the vital truths that have been taken for granted" (*ibid.*, 107). A poetic language that reclaims ordinary truths, that recasts them in an idiom that gives freshness to them, is a fundamental occupation for a poet, says Tiempo. The poet's poetry, therefore, becomes true to the poem's original vocation, to what the Greeks call *poisis*, which is the permanence of the eternal desire to make. An act, therefore, that rebels against things fixed and static. Tiempo suggests then the need to keep truths away from the perils of stasis. Thus, "the best poetry," Tiempo contemplates, "becomes a kind of crusading poetry" (*ibid.*). Accordingly, the "poetic outlook tries to point out wherein lies the true coherence" (*ibid.*, 109). In another venue, Tiempo (1962, 133) repeats the duty that Shelley

assigns to the poet. "I may define the poet's responsibility by quoting Shelley. He said that the poet is the prophet and the legislator of mankind."

### **The Poetics of In-Betweenness**

Being a legislator, however, is one thing. Being a poet, another. Indeed it is the mark of Tiempo that she stresses, always and always, the dual requirement of form and substance. Such unity, obviously, is central to the education of the poet as a fine legislator of human history.

In the central document "Limits—or Chaos," Tiempo (1962b, 104) sets out to define "what it is that makes it good poetry and not something that is stranded on the borderland of poetry and non-poetry."<sup>4</sup> This classification Tiempo initiates in order to create a consensus that will govern poetry's nature, a standard that will separate the work from the attempt. Tiempo initiates this necessary project so that the "usual problem that plagues us regarding the interpretation and evaluation of a poem will then yield to systematic scrutiny because, with a clearly-cut and clearly understood definition of poetry, the practicing and the alert readers are automatically provided with a criterion." The vital character of poetry, says Tiempo, "is the fact that the artistic principles are put to use in a pointed, condensed and intensified and regularized manner" (*ibid.*). What Tiempo means is that the formal elements in poetry are deployed meaningfully in order to produce a distilled sense and not merely to embellish. As Tiempo explains, the "systematized treatment of the elements of rhythm, meter, imagery, attitude, and the like is inevitable in poetry because this device of directed manipulation and concentration is responsible for the singularly sharp and immediate communication that one gets only in poetry, where the rendered experience stands out in triumphant relief, and the core of the experience is clean and splinterless to the probing touch of the reader." What makes a poem a poem in the light of Tiempo's critical optic is therefore "the compact, heightened and directed use of language and launched from a special slant or point of view" (*ibid.*, 105). Of course, this is Tiempo of the exact New Critical strain, lauding magic terms like subtlety, irony, paradox, yoked opposites, condensed images, lyric grace on the surface,

and imperturbable logic underneath. And true to her form, Tiempo exalts the theory at one moment and disrupts it the next. Witness:

My next concern is to try to isolate (as far as such a thing is possible) the element that makes for the "modern-ness" or rather, the "contemporaneousness" of our poetry. What, really, do we have in mind when we say "modern poetry," or "contemporary poetry"? The Filipino poet seeking to understand the frequently obscure and alternately fascinating and baffling quality that stands for the contemporaneousness of his genre has to take a good look at comparatively recent poetic history in order to trace the origin and development of this new quality: I mean that, using as he does the English language and functioning mainly in the English poetic tradition, he has to go back, chronologically speaking, to the Imagists, who in the 1920s first broke away from the fettering concepts of the Victorian brand of romanticism, and its other fetishes inherited from the previous century. The Imagists freed the contemporary poet from the tyranny of special "poetic" material. (*Ibid.*, 106)

Paradoxically, Tiempo locates the roots of tradition not in the time of its continuity but in its disruption. The "contemporaneousness" of contemporary poetry is, as Tiempo elucidates, an artifact of a revolution in taste and sensibility. A change that the Imagists propound as a response to what Tiempo calls the fettering principles of the Victorian brand of romanticism. For Tiempo this knowledge is important in order to understand the temperament of contemporary poetry. What Tiempo does here is no less than unorthodox; she connects the roots of Philippine poetry in English with an unruly tradition in the West—a tradition in the heart of the West that questions its most cherished claims. The beginning of the word, therefore, is profoundly questioning and critical. As a moment of fissure, the tradition of the Imagists can only be described thus, as a disruptive one that has an immense impact not only on how poetry is professed but also on the way the poetic form is conceived and executed. Coinciding with the freedom that attends the choice of poetic material is the breakdown in the external qualities of structure, an interruption that signals the liberation from the usual requirements of meter, rhythm, and rhyme. The autonomy that results

from this break in tradition is, warns Tiempo, a seduction that leads to either death or life. This "absence of external restraint is the secret despair of many a poet today who does not know what to do with so much apparent freedom. His uncertainty shows in his lines, which are either chopped-up or flabby—since, the external bounds having been cast aside, he no longer knows where to begin or where to stop a line" (ibid.). The problem with regard to the newfound poetic form, Tiempo adds, is multiplied by the contemporary writers' misinterpretation of the literary approaches of the French Symbolists. They fail, she says, to discern the "economy, the strict logic and tight system underneath the musical and meandering vagueness of phrase and image" (ibid., 107). It is at this point, with the lessons of the French Symbolists brought into play, where Tiempo puts into play the disruptive edge of the movement.

This she does in her reading of Arthur Rimbaud's poem titled "Hunger."<sup>5</sup> Tiempo originally intends to show how the internal sense of order found in French Symbolist texts works in Rimbaud's poem. The poem, notes Tiempo, displays a broken depiction of the normal order of things in an astonishing sharpness of details. The cursory effect is that of vagueness, illogic, and chaos. But Tiempo qualifies that the disorder is resolved by the strict logic and purpose underpinning the observable elements that seem like textual ruins. Tiempo proceeds to interpret. "The broken pebbles," deciphers Tiempo, "and the old stones of churches and the gravel from the ancient deluge and the calcified wood in withered swamps could very likely stand for the debris of old orders, the deposits from the crumbled foundations of old credos and faiths—an interpretation that is justifiable when one remembers that the French Symbolists were also known as the *Decadents*, so named for their predilection for writing on the tattered vestiges of social systems fallen into decay, and on established ideas that are already showing the morbid turn of approaching dissolution" (ibid.). Here, a reading of form transforms into a reading of content, an unalterable symptom of Tiempo's passionate intimacy with the necessities of content. Tiempo perfectly shows in her reading of Rimbaud that nothing "outside" the text—society, culture, history, politics, ideology—is ever alien to the poem; that a glowingly wrought poem serves only to throw

more light on a thought that otherwise strikes the human eye as unmemorable, always already forgotten and forgettable. As Tiempo (1962a, 131) would say: "Form is nothing but way." The successful form leads, in other words, to a successful communication of a critical perspective. Tiempo suggests that a work that desires to become sound must ensure that the external and the internal mutually draw from each other the singular power to articulate and ferry across an idea, a feeling, or a pain. It is not surprising, hence, that what initially purports to be a New Critical decoding of Rimbaud's poem ends up deriving its hermeneutic potency from an "extrinsic" knowledge of the approach itself that Tiempo, in the end, invokes in order to validate her interpretation.

Such curious affinity with the "extrinsic" is a sign that surprisingly makes itself constant in Tiempo's critical production on the nature of poetry. The hand of the "extrinsic" appears in Tiempo's critical corpus in ways not beyond elucidation. In an essay on Philippine poetry in English, for example, Tiempo (1966, 618) goes beyond form's boundaries, as one is "struck by the scarcity of material that deals squarely with the socio-political concerns of the country." Tiempo comments moreover that the "most promising poetry in the Philippines today is usually non-sociological and deals with neutral, private, 'sort-of-tableau' situations" (*ibid.*, 620). Tiempo cites the examples of Emmanuel Torres and his ode to a woman at the window, Fidel de Castro with his speculations on the house mouse, and Leonidas Benesa on his self-possessed reflection on the stranger at the gate. Such condition is not entirely deplorable. "[B]ut, after all the poetry of a country, to be vigorous, must also be inspired by the predicament of the collective man" (*ibid.*). "What I am trying to say," Tiempo clarifies, "is that at present the Philippine poet writing in English seems to feel safer dealing with the 'inner man' only when the material does not demand the projection of a very particularized social experience; when it does not require the definition of a specific pain that is felt in the national marrow and seared into the national flesh" (*ibid.*, 618).

It is Tiempo's general observation that the poetic yield of contemporary poets is intensely private and tends to avoid what she calls sociological issues. "Here, the poet evades the responsibility of asserting for others, and speaks only of his own esoteric insights" (*ibid.*, 619).



Thus, Tiempo concludes, "poetry is not full-bodied; it is probably becoming more ivory tower than it should be" (ibid., 621). Tiempo warns against this neglect that is ultimately inimical to the poet who gives too much attention, she says, to "the imagery of the soul in almost trivial situations" (ibid., 620). Tiempo thinks, in other words, that the contemporary poet's disproportionate production of the imagery of the soul has no body to speak of, no flesh that hungers, no heart that struggles against injustice. At last, Tiempo's imperative regarding the total unity between form and content finds its proper equivalence in her emphasis on the fundamental correspondence between the soul and the body. The soul becomes fulfilled if the social experience of the poet is addressed as a proper poetic subject. For Tiempo, the poet's achievement of form becomes complete if the equal duty of defining the poet's particular social experience is also achieved. The form of the poetic is, therefore, imaginable as the form of the political as the social. Tiempo acts here as the interlocutor between the intrinsic and extrinsic, which may also be thought of as symbolic of the link between literature and society. It is clear that Tiempo invokes the absolute unity of opposites but does not lose sight of the split in contemporary poetic production in English. On the one hand, Tiempo acknowledges the quality of the poetic production. On the other, she warns against poems that fail to assert for others.

Tiempo explains this problem. She proposes that the alienation of contemporary writers from the *socius* is an experience that is derivative of their original linguistic disconnection. "With the influence of the West and the use of the new language in the country, there has inevitably started to develop new ways of thinking and saying. This whole process of growth," Tiempo continues, "hastened the breakdown of the older system of allegory in poetry and encouraged a drifting away from the more indigenous attitudes" (ibid., 618). To borrow Francisco Arcellana's (1966, 541-43) suitable phrase, the poet confronts the specter of "double alienation." First there is the moment of the poet's separation from his language, and then there is the inevitability of the poet being cut off from his reality. Tiempo (1954, 1-11) discusses this problem of language more fully in her earlier essay. On the whole, the essay is concerned with the dilemma that attends the use of English in

Philippine writing and how it can be resolved. Tiempo tries to explore the possibilities that come with the "writers' attempts to resolve the inevitable problem of artistic fidelity of the foreign language to the native material."<sup>6</sup> Crucial to Tiempo is the production of a creative work in English that "does not misrepresent or destroy the native flavor," one that is, ultimately, "neither part Western nor Filipino, nor yet a hybrid, because it is finally neither part Western language nor part Philippine material" (*ibid.*, 9, 10). What is implied here is that the product that results from the fusion between a native imagination and a foreign language is, in the end, a text whose life depends on the infinite plenitude of in-between shades of meanings—a work that always locates itself, its chains of signification and significance, in the valley of its thinking and saying.

It can be said that Tiempo's analysis of Philippine poetry in English illustrates a complex of issues emanating from problems specific to form and content. Interestingly enough, these issues proceed and operate under the logic of duality: form and content, intrinsic and extrinsic, spirit and body, etc. On one hand, Tiempo propounds the absolute unity of the opposites; that a serious writer must be able to conceive the harmony of form and content. On the other, Tiempo explores the problem of alienation of contemporary poets who concentrate disproportionately on form and remain impervious to what she deems the poet's social responsibility. In other words, while contemporary poets seem to have mastered the poetic form, they fail to give shape to a greater sense of content that extends beyond the deeply private, one that is able ultimately to envision the collective. These moments of disintegration derive, according to Tiempo, from the introduction of the English language that hastens the collapse of the older system of allegory in Philippine poetry. The entry of the English language signals the poet's separation from what she calls indigenous attitudes. One may suggest that Tiempo's constant invocation of the unity of the opposites is a way of responding to the original moment of loss that the introduction of a foreign idiom occasions. Tiempo's indomitable endorsement of the coherence of the contrary can be taken, therefore, as a logical response of a writer who inherits the violence of such a separ-

ration, a writer's attempt to restore the unity of something that is always already beyond restoration. The need to be socially relevant is, therefore, a symptom of Tiempo's desire to bring back the vanished unity and, consequently, render coherent the use of a foreign idiom, which in the light of history, is easily one of its ironies. Necessarily, the will to be socially significant is a specter that haunts the likes of Tiempo.

One can go as far as saying that this predilection to go beyond corresponds with Tiempo's will to move beyond the unity of form and content, which, in her discussion of the use of English in creative writing, is conceived as the ability to dwell in the in-between shades of meaning. Thus, finally, neither form nor content, neither politics nor aesthetics, neither intrinsic nor extrinsic, neither heart nor mind, but both and beyond, much more. Here resides the power of Tiempo. Being in the middle, she holds the extraordinary power to remedy the separate inadequacies of form and content and make them whole. Tiempo therefore represents the capacity to interpret and ferry across to form the possibilities given by content and to content, possibilities given by form. The danger that attends the tendency to be predominantly associated with only and only a single side and, consequently, tied to its narrow demands is thus prevented. Hence Tiempo offers the promise of the unified opposites. The symbol of Tiempo is hence the symbol of the intermediary, a figure whose authority resides in her capacity to envision the consensual and to avoid the perils of envisioning form and content as separate and closed totalities.

### **From New Critical to Post-Structural?**

Tiempo's transitional and transcendental gift is what the other poet-critic Abad is able to see. He portrays Tiempo as the fitting figure of that scene where the New Critical regime shifts to what he calls the "open, post-structuralist, liberative space" (Abad 1999, 14). According to Abad, two of Tiempo's poems, namely, "Lament for the Littlest Fellow" and "Bonsai," mark the fundamental spaces of our writing in English. The first goes:

The littlest fellow was a marmoset.  
 He held the bars and blinked his old man's eyes.  
 You said he knew us and took my arm and set  
 My fingers around the bars, with coaxing mimicries  
 Of squeak and twitter. "Now he thinks you are  
 Another marmoset in a cage." A proud denial  
 Set you to laughing, shutting back a question far  
 Into my mind, something enormous and final.

The question was unasked but there is an answer.  
 Sometimes in your sleeping face upon the pillow,  
 I would catch our own little truant unaware;  
 He had fled from our pain and the dark room of our rage,  
 But I would snatch him back from yesterday and tomorrow.  
 You wake and I bruise my hands on the living cage.

"Bonsai" goes:

All that I love  
 I fold over once  
 And once again  
 And keep in a box  
 Or a slit in a hollow post  
 Or in my shoe.

*A//* that I love?  
 Why, yes, but for the moment—  
 And for all time, both.  
 Something that folds and keeps easy,  
 Son's note or Dad's one gaudy tie,  
 A roto picture of a young queen,  
 A blue Indian shawl, even  
 A money bill.

It's utter sublimation,  
 A feat, this heart's control  
 Moment to moment  
 To scale all love down  
 To a cupped hand's size,

Till seashells are broken pieces  
From God's own bright teeth,  
And life and love are real  
Things you can run and  
Breathless hand over  
To the merest child.

The strength of Abad's claims concerning the difference between the New Critical mode and the post-structuralist text lies mainly in his reading of the poems' specific form. The "open, post-structuralist, liberative space" is the scene "where seemingly there does not exist any formal constraint upon what may be called poetry" (Abad 1999, 14). Abad notes that the first poem, "Lament," assumes the sonnet's form with its own metrical arrangement. Easily discernible in the text is the presence of a single metaphor, that of a caged marmoset, which organizes the experience of the poem. The other poem, meanwhile, "is as it were a free form" whose words enforce not so much the poem's idea and feeling as image, but the idea itself of a memento. For Abad, what makes "Bonsai" open and post-structuralist is the fact that "the revelation about those souvenirs *is* the poem, and it would be the highest art to state it quite simply, without that rhetoric of irony and ambiguity so cherished in the New Critical mode" (ibid., 27). Unlike "Lament" whose truth's unraveling relies wholly on artifice, "Bonsai" is pure because essential and unadorned. The words of "Bonsai," Abad suggests, do not form the poem, but rather, it is the poetry of the words' revelation that makes it a poem. Not the idea about the experience in the poem, but the experience itself. It is the pure revelation that constitutes the poem.

Abad claims that his reading of Tiempo's poems "rests on a fundamental assumption about poetry: that it reinvents language. The poet must find *his language again within*—that is to say, within itself (for any language is already a way of perceiving reality) and within oneself (how, before words or speech, one thinks and feels)" (ibid., 28). Simply, what Abad wants to say is that Tiempo says what she means in the latter poem without any sense of recognizable artifice. This ability, professes Abad, is what makes for the poem's ostensible post-structuralist air. One

realizes, however, that the solidity of Abad's argument disintegrates when placed against the historical specificity of Tiempo's self-professed poetics. One only needs to return to Tiempo's magisterial article "Limits—or Chaos" to realize that the post-structuralist temper that Abad finds present in "Bonsai" is nothing more than Tiempo's articulation of the rebellious tradition that the Imagists and the French Symbolists typify. What Abad recognizes as the purported post-structuralist character of the poem is, for Tiempo, plainly *vers libre*—a collapse in the external aspects of structure. Abad's misrecognition of the absence of external structure as the seeming total lack of structural logic is, indeed, unfortunate. For, as Tiempo writes decades before the cult of post-structuralism, the disintegration in the external limits of form does not mean the complete disappearance of structure. Put differently, an internal sense of structure takes the place of the external form. "Concerning this insufficiency in the external limits that help to define poetry, the answer of many responsible critics to this insufficiency lay, still lies, not in non-form, which is the same as non-art, but in closer attention to the *internal* limits, of which any acceptable external bounds are but a manifestation, in the first place" (Tiempo 1962b, 109). Thus, for Tiempo, the ultimate "salvation of the young poet today is in seeking and understanding the *internal* limits of his art" (*ibid.*). The idea of an internal logic that defines *vers libre* is, according to Tiempo, secured by the New Critical dicta of subtlety, paradox, ambiguity, and the like that have taken over the rudiments of old. Admittedly, the Tiempo that speaks here is the Tiempo of the New Critical strain, not the critical, transgressive, functional, and other Tiempo.

It is curious therefore that the temperament that Abad appoints as the Angel of post-structuralist poeticizing announces at once the resurgence of the New Critical spirit. This appropriation, doubtless, reflects more Abad's own intents rather than Tiempo's. Finally, however, it is not so much Abad's misreading as it is Tiempo's proven command to anticipate the future—its manifest and latent tendencies, structures of feeling, and ways of seeing—that is significant. In short, Tiempo consistently defies the very boundary that she herself ordains, ever true to her radical and shifting spirit that dwells in the plenitude of her self-professed in-betweenness.

## Extensions, Beyond

Perhaps it is this same plasticity, this gentle suppleness that Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas sees in the poetry of her mother. "My mother writes poetry," says Tiempo-Torrevillas (1993, v-vi), "much the same way the violets in her garden grow—and the other living, well-loved things in her care, as well: the furious secret mysterious process taking place unobtrusively underneath the carefully tended balance of sun and shade and a gentle hand, with lots of open space. Always the open space, the door to her study that is never shut." "I see the poems," Tiempo-Torrevillas continues, "being born in the sunshine, in the shade of a mango tree while the harvesters banter and count the fruit, in the pool of light cast by her study lamp at twilight in the short interregnum before supper is served. *Being* born; *being* written."

Undeniably the openness that Tiempo's poetry shows is the same flexibility that characterizes her poetics. The influence of Tiempo's poetics extends over the said and yet unsaid, the boundless spaces of the promising both secret and open. Echoing Tiempo-Torrevillas, Tiempo's particular poetics is born as well as written at around the same time the being of the poet is born, written. This same being, one imagines, must have something to do, in more ways than one, with Tiempo as a subject who writes poetry and poetics. Simply put, with Tiempo as poet who transports the world into word the way she conceives both the world and word as a woman writer. This is not, however, to reduce the complexity of Tiempo's poetics to the single truth of her subjectivity. But rather, it is implied that Tiempo as woman poet must have informed the way her poetics is able to comprehend the poetic form. Elsewhere, for instance, Tiempo (1999, 11) acknowledges this connection between being a writer and being a woman. "[I]here is the consciousness," she confesses, "of my being a woman. My whole stance in writing is tied up with being a woman." Tiempo even goes as far as saying that her specific creative act as a woman inextricably links her to the Romantic tradition. "I think that women writers," remarks Tiempo, "write in this tradition. If a woman is true to herself, she will write as a romantic." By aligning herself with the romantic predilection for the life and speech of the common, the elemental feelings of the

rural folk, Tiempo necessarily allies herself with the mass of the world and, more importantly, with a consciousness ceaselessly inchoate and in flux. Writing as woman, therefore, is to write the impulses contingent upon being a woman. To write the wide-ranging contingencies of being a woman is, understandably, to write the silences that attend the woman's subjectivity as a writer. "If," as Tiempo indicates, "she turns off her inner promptings and instead attempts to be purely objective, I think the effect will be artificial because the life springs are not there." Tiempo's subjectivity and the professed proclivity of such a disposition are here brought into play because they are tremendously central to Tiempo's absolute ability, as a language-maker, to slip in and out of concepts, epochs, and meanings. As her essay on poetics felicitously titled "The Transport from Dream to Design" explains, "the poet's discipline is to learn more and more naturally how to recognize and respond to the materialized promptings of that inner agency, the sub-conscious, as its ideas and sensibilities break into more consciously guided evolution of the poem" (Tiempo 1995b, 141). Tiempo is properly the fluid and uneven character that she is precisely because she endeavors to write the unconscious. She becomes, in other words, the interlocutor of nameless desires, ferrying dream to design.

Interestingly enough, Tiempo's conception of poetic writing as fundamentally an act associated with the ferrying across of impulses from the unconscious to the conscious bares its latency as early as 1953. In an essay elucidating Edilberto K. Tiempo's poem titled "Saint Anthony's Feat," Tiempo (1953, 161) suggests that necessary to the growth of the poem are "certain complex reactions which are revealed or evoked in the process, and these reactions interweave to produce the final psychological revelation, a revelation lifted up [sic] from the small situation to a richer, more universal application at the end." Exactly four decades later Tiempo (1995a, 324-43) writes more fully of this process.<sup>7</sup> It is fascinating to note that Tiempo's terms such as psychological revelation, internal limits, intuition, internal agency, inner promptings, all refer to Tiempo's notion regarding the transport from the realm of the unconscious to the site of the conscious. The implications of this idea are immense. In "Beyond, Extensions" Tiempo bewails the restraining



ascendancy of the intellect, the rational itself, in directing the skilled application of aesthetic principles to the poetic process. "[L]ogic and reason," she goes, "direct the verbalizing, the actual composition of the piece" (ibid., 322). The pervasive rule of reason tends, according to Tiempo, to impede the potential to realize what extends beyond the rational, which the rational itself cannot grasp and rule. For Tiempo, this condition results in a tendency to discipline, thus, structure, the dissident impulses of the unconscious using the logic of poetic form. Thus, "[m]ore and more of our poets," Tiempo laments, "are so engrossed in the creative tussle with words and images" (ibid., 325).

This criticism reminds one of Tiempo's critique of the dominant brand of poeticizing in 1965. Lest her position be misconstrued, Tiempo reiterates that what she intends to do is not to abandon craftsmanship but to demand of it the capacity to articulate what lies at the tip of the tongue and its saying, existences waiting for existences which would frame the incidence of their being. Here Tiempo proposes intuition, that amorphous thing which is "involved with the ultimate substance and attitude of the poem, deciding the texture and the quality" (ibid., 323). Tiempo, the transgressive woman poet and romantic, advocates the demolition of established ideas. One must try instead, she says, to dwell in the sphere of ambiguities and blended concepts and paradoxes where the truth "is more full-bodied than the either-or choices that our more simplifying and practical world affords our intellect" (ibid., 324). Instead of maintaining the insular tendencies of the rational, the intellect "should leap beyond the safety of this rational domain, and into the intuitional, where these ideas await discovery in their extended forms: for it is a region of extensions and blended disparate concepts, where the logic of everyday is transformed, enriched, and made vigorous." There, in the realm devoid of logic's limiting definitions, "we are," posits Tiempo, "open to the new and unexpected aspects of reality." Tiempo, perfectly aware of the consequence of such a radical proposition, affirms the value of what she deems the "dissident preference for the intuitive" (ibid., 326). Hence, that which reason negates the essential poet must recover and, if need be, live out its very death in order to speak the grief of its loss.

## Form and Freedom

In the end what this labor professes to do is to grasp the political potential of the question of form—for the necessity of form leads ultimately to the realization of its freedom. To think of form, therefore, is not to think against freedom. Thus the question of form is necessarily a political one: The formal is political. Tiempo illustrates to us the political potential of the question of form. By attempting to ferry across to form the possibilities of content, and to content the possibilities of form, Tiempo reveals the promise of their absolute unity. This absolute unity is the logical horizon of all struggles.

There is of course the danger of Tiempo's New Critical origin. But this risk is educational. What is foolish is to ignore Tiempo's works solely because they carry the mark of New Criticism. To dismiss Tiempo as emblematic of an insufferable orthodoxy is to deny the hope of Philippine poetry in English. This work believes that Tiempo is ultimately prudent in her use of New Critical tenets. Tiempo, in fact, is more critical than she is New Critical for she gestures toward the framing of the question of form as, necessarily, a political problem. The fulfillment of content is, clearly, inseparable from the fulfillment of form. The realization of one is the other's equal achievement. As such there is indeed a profound lesson that we can glean from Tiempo's example. This lesson is made possible by the fact that Tiempo serves as the mediator between form and content, the power that ferries across. For the voice of Tiempo is appropriately the voice of the unconscious, the inchoate, the flowing, and the desiring made-absent. This is the same tenor that sustains the critical spirit of the romantic, woman-transgressor, and other Tiempo who lives and moves beyond the margins she chooses to limn her idea of poetry and what it can be. These same boundaries she elects to transform and make into what they professedly are not. Here, then, lies the power of Tiempo. Her ingenuity to imagine the extensions of both critical and poetic structures, within whose bounds she exists, grants her the radical intuition to realize the ways of structures' ultimate undoing.

Accordingly, it can be rightfully claimed that Tiempo's capacity to disentangle her poetics from the dichotomies of form and content, of

intrinsic and extrinsic, of aesthetics and politics, is rooted in her very desire to articulate what lies ceaselessly forming in the abyss of those entangling dualities. It is not surprising therefore that Tiempo's unique substance derives its authority from her own desire to seize the promise that resides only in the absolute unity of poetry and poetics, in the deciding yet undecidable coherence of writing and criticism. Needless to say, all this becomes more vital in the light of Tiempo's place and position as one of the country's most influential critics and poets. She, along with her husband, is the founder of the first writing workshop in the country that continues to produce writers since 1962. Tiempo, best known as a poet even if she has produced more works of fiction than poetry collections, continues to command and influence younger generations of writers. The truth of this condition compels us more to grasp properly the promise of Tiempo's labors. Finally, the most enduring lessons of Tiempo's idea of poetry persist in its foibles and prospects. These same errors, which truly are professions of hope, must help us understand the continuing present of what we have come to call, paradoxically, as Philippine poetry in English.

## Notes

1. It is indeed serendipitous that the only woman poet in Casper's selection, Tiempo, becomes decades later the first woman National Artist for Literature, a pantheon undoubtedly dominated by male writers like Villa, Joaquin, Arcellana, and José.

2. There is, however, a notable lack of appraisal of Tiempo's critical works. Barreto-Chow's study of Tiempo is particularly laudable for it discloses Tiempo's criticism for further criticism. Interestingly enough, Barreto-Chow (1989, 255) comments that "Philippine literary criticism is a rich but unexplored field" and that "there is a need to multiply and intensify efforts toward a study of the critical works themselves." See also, Barreto-Chow 1990, 388-97.

3. The poem by Unite goes: "Not one window now may mend/ My manhood my house by the street/ Of slow and rapid transit and/ No door define or divide me/ A secret and definite geography,/ Yet they hand a blue anomaly between/ My waking and the oblique day,/ I can not fly them, house or manhood/ In the dead and desiccated city" (Tiempo 1948, 24-26).

4. One is puzzled, however, why this document is not included in the selection of Tiempo's representative critical essays edited by Abad and others. This text

contains Tiempo's full discussion on the problem of the poetic form. The same document also contains her poetic credo. One wonders if the exclusion is because of Tiempo's discussion of literary traditions that are clearly Western, along which she aligns Philippine poetry in English.

5. Rimbaud's poem runs thus: "Eat the pebbles that one breaks,/ Churches' old stones;/ Gravel of ancient deluge taste,/ And loaves scattered in grey brakes" (Tiempo 1962b, 107).

6. As Tiempo notes: "Certain English words and phrases become incongruous when they are used to depict non-existent equivalents or falsify the parallel situations they intend to depict; something, roughly, like painting in one medium what should most 'naturally' be done in another" (Tiempo 1954, 1).

7. Succeeding references to this article follow the pagination in *An Edith Tiempo Reader* where the same essay is reprinted.

## References

- Abad, Gémino H. 1993. Introduction to *Beyond, extensions* by Edith L. Tiempo. Manila: La Diane.
- Abad, Gémino H. 1999. Introduction to *A habit of shores: Filipino poetry and verse form English, 60's to the 90's*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Abad, Gémino H, et al. 1999. *An Edith Tiempo reader*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Arcellana, Francisco. 1966. Filipino English poetry: A double alienation. *Philippine Studies* 14, no. 3: 541–43.
- Barreto-Chow, Maria Elena. 1989. Edith Tiempo's definition of poetry: 1950–86. *Philippine Studies* 37: 255–82.
- Barreto-Chow. 1990. Edith Tiempo and the problem of language in Philippine poetry. *Philippine Studies* 38: 388–97.
- Casper, Leonard, ed. 1954. *Six Filipino poets*. Manila: Benipayo Press.
- Cruz, Isagani R. 1999. Edith L. Tiempo as Literary Critic. In *An Edith Tiempo reader*, ed. Gémino H. Abad, et al. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Tiempo, Edith L. 1948. The metaphor: Its choice and use in a poem. *Sands and Coral*: 24–26.
- . 1953. Psychological revelation in a poem. *Silliman Journal* (April): 160–65.
- . 1954. The use of English in Philippine creative writing. *Silliman Journal*: (January): 1–11
- . 1956. A bright coherence: The outlook of the modern poet. *Silliman Journal*, no. 2: 103–9.
- . 1962a. Discussions at the forum on poetry. *Comment*: 127–37.

- . 1962b. Limits—or chaos. *Comment*: 104–11.
- . 1966. Philippine poetry in English. *Silliman Journal* (4): 617–21.
- . 1995a. Beyond, extension. *Tinig 2—Living voice in conversation*, ed. Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio, 324–43. Quezon City: UP Creative Writing Center.
- . 1995b. The transport from dream to design. In *A passionate patience: Ten poets on the writing of their poems*, ed. Ricardo M. de Ungria. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, Inc.
- . 1997. Hymn, sob, psalm: An interview with Edith L. Tiempo. Interview by J. Edmundo Reyes, *Pen and Ink* (Book II): 13–18.
- . 1999. Edith L. Tiempo: Poetry as the rhythm of violets. Interview by Edna Zapanta Manlapaz and Marjorie Evasco in *An Edith Tiempo reader*, ed. Gémino H. Abad, et al. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Tiempo-Torrevillas, Rowena. 1993. Introduction to *The charmer's box*. Manila: De La Salle University Press.
- Yuson, Alfred. 1999. Another fine day with Mom Edith. In *An Edith Tiempo reader*, ed. Gémino H. Abad, et al. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.