

***ESKINITA AND OTHER POEMS***  
**AND**  
**FORM, HISTORIOGRAPHY, AND NATION**  
**IN NICK JOAQUIN'S *ALMANAC FOR MANILEÑOS***

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## Contents

Abstracts	4
Declaration	5
Copyright Statement	5
Acknowledgements	6
<i>Eskinita</i> and Other Poems	
The Collapse of What Separates Us	8
Fog	9
Cornerhouse	10
Market	11
If You Can't See My Mirrors I Can't See You	13
"Poetry is read on faces. Therefore it is urgent to create new faces."	14
Ferrante and Teicher	19
Making Scenes	22
Short Walks	24
Static	27
Café	29
<i>Eskinita</i>	32
Form, Historiography, and Nation in Nick Joaquin's <i>Almanac for Manileños</i>	
Introduction: Time Lines: Framing the <i>Almanac for Manileños</i>	54
Chapter 1: Contextualising and Theorising the Almanac Genre	
Planetary Motions and Road Directions: Elements of the Almanac	65
"To Alter Radically How Time Is Lived": Social, Political, and Cultural Functions of the Almanac	70
Precisely Cut Components, Large-Scale Constructions: Heteroglossia, Montage, and Nation as Conceptual Frameworks	90
Chapter 2: A Portrait of the <i>Almanac</i> as Historiography	
Momentary Interruptions, Historicising Uncertainties: Critical Reception of Nick Joaquin	103
"Wedded in the Association": Cohesion of Discrepant Materials and Accommodation of Distinct Genres in the <i>Almanac</i>	125

"Giving Calendar Dates Their Physiognomy": Compression, Conjunction, and Direction in the Calendars	134
"The Crystal of the Total Event": Fragmentary Historiography in the Essays	142
"Headier Bits of Reading": Aesthetics and Politics of Non-Linear Historiography	161
Conclusion: Unrealised Coherences, Thwarted Conjunctions	171
Works Cited	178
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## Abstracts

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*Eskinita* and Other Poems

*Eskinita and Other Poems* is a collection of poems and sequences with Manila as its context and the city walker as its key figure. An *eskinita*—a Tagalog diminution of the Spanish word *esquina*, which means "corner"—is a term used to refer to sidestreet so narrow that even a car would find it hard to maneuver there; an *eskinita* that leads to a dead end, moreover, is called an *interior*. Grounded in, yet taking flight from, the language and imagery of Manila, the manuscript draws on the city's history and its present moment as it juxtaposes personal experiences and scholarly sources to portray a city whose development—considered in works like Nick Joaquin's *Manila, My Manila*, Manuel Caoili's *The Origins of Metropolitan Manila*, and Robert Reed's *Colonial Manila*—is bound up with political, social, economic, and postcolonial structures. Through this space goes the city walker, a figure considered in literary and theoretical texts like Walter Benjamin's study on the flâneur, Michel de Certeau's analysis of walking, and psychogeographic writings of the Situationists. The poems are concerned with formal strategies that take their cues from Anglo-American Modernism—collages of texts in lyric and prose, serial structures, and line splicings—and aim to express the complex experience of walking in Manila, of writing Manila: juxtapositions and interpenetrations between interior and exterior, scholarly and demotic language, past and present. The long poem *Eskinita* extends the use of these devices: apart from prose and verse combinations, it incorporates quotation, parataxis, and photography. Although the overt aim is to offer, using the aesthetic resources of poetry, multiple and refracted views of Manila, *Eskinita* nevertheless endeavours to express—by constraining words, lines, and page layout—a sense of containment and limit. By counterpointing multiple textual and visual modes—and including various sources and formal devices—*Eskinita and Other Poems* explores and sometimes rejoices in the tensions between polyphonic and disjunctive elements, and the way their structures generate resonance and dialogue between unlikely familiars.

Form, Historiography, and Nation in Nick Joaquin's *Almanac for Manileños*

This thesis argues that the *Almanac*—when contextualised within the long-standing tradition of the almanac genre, and examined using the theoretical underpinnings of Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, Walter Benjamin's views of fragmentary historiography, and intertwining aspects of literary form and nation formation—expresses the multiple, not singular, temporalities that constitute and complicate the Filipino nation. Produced in 1979, during Martial Law in the Philippines, the *Almanac's* formal strategy—demonstrated by the accommodation of discrepant genres, compression and correspondence in the calendars, and fragmentation in the essays—is a kind of non-linear historical emplotment. Such an aesthetic—derived in part from Modernism—is distinct from, and critically interrogates, fixed and linear articulations of national history. The focus of the analysis is a reading of the *Almanac's* calendars and essays. The distinctions and interactions between these subgenres result in a text that is both cohesive and stratified: calendrical entries which are comprised of national and religious elements and have past and future orientations inhabit the same space as temporally disjunctive essays. Despite fragmentation, the *Almanac* is nevertheless held together by correspondences and associations. The *Almanac's* oblique and tangential strategy of representing Philippine history—when seen in the light of the obsolescence of a now-moribund but then-vital genre—critiques linear historiography. By accommodating accounts of missed chances and foregrounding seemingly irrelevant details, Joaquin's *Almanac* interrogates historical narratives which, in the name of progress, fail to incorporate materials that are aberrant and inconsequential.

## Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification from this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Some poems have appeared or are forthcoming in the following journals and anthologies: *New Poetries V* (ed. Michael Schmidt), *Kritika Kultura 14* (ed. Lulu Torres-Reyes, literary ed. Mark Cayanan, intro. Conchitina Cruz), *High Chair 13* (ed. Kristine Domingo and Allan Popa), *High Chair 11* (ed. Mesándel Virtusio Arguelles, Mabi David, and Oliver Ortega), and *An Anthology of English Writing in Southeast Asia* (ed. Rajeev Patke). An early version of "Short Walks" was published in *Writing to the Future: Poetika at Politika ng Malikhaing Pagsulat* (ed. Rolando Tolentino). An early version of *Eskinita* was published in *The Kritika Kultura Anthology of New Philippine Writing in English* (eds. Mark Cayanan, Conchitina Cruz, and Adam David). In 2009, *The Collapse of What Separates Us* won first prize for poetry in the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature (Philippines). *Collapse* was published by High Chair in 2010. Early versions of the critical work were delivered as papers at the 5th Graduate Forum on Southeast Asia Studies (Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore), the Critical Forum on Literature and Cultural Studies (Department of English, Ateneo de Manila University), and the Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference (Lingnan University, Hong Kong). I would like to thank all the editors, publishers, foundations, and organisers for the attention they gave to my work.

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*Eskinita* and Other Poems

## The Collapse of What Separates Us



## Fog

Fog does to edges what a whisper does to words. Ends of branches, hard and thin as icepicks, blur into softness. You can't see the end of the street. Figures are smudges. A woman nearby says to a boy: *I'm as disappointed as you are, but what can I do.* The boy scowls. *We'll try again next week. Shhh. It's OK.* There is no fog in my city; we put dry ice in water. Vapour covers the basin's rim. Vapour hides tiles' edges. Dry ice turns to gas without first becoming water. The verb for this is *sublime*. What is solid melts into air; references are unfixed. Next week, when whispered, is nearby. Three intersections down, the stoplight colours fade into grey. Names of streets can't be read. They can be anything. Escolta is Deansgate. Fog is vapour. We touch dry ice. Our fingers burn. Definition of metaphor: the collapse of what separates us. Dry ice does not say goodbye to water when it becomes air. Fog is farewell. What can I do. It's OK. I'll see you soon. The future is a city away. This is sublime.

## Cornerhouse

A couple is waiting for their meal. There's a drawing on the wall nearby. A family of six rides a motorcycle. Three children on the curb watch them pass. There's graffiti behind the children: the Statue of Liberty, but instead of a face—eyesockets, a hole not a nose, teeth. The man reads a magazine. The woman reads a book. The meal arrives: sandwich, soup. In my city, often, families ride motorcycles too, even on highways, where buses speed past. In provinces, to accommodate more, the motorcycle driver adds planks. The driver has difficulty balancing. Still, everyone moves forward, as wobbly as a country with too many children and not enough books, too many breaths and not enough meals. The man looks at his sandwich; he looks at her; he nods. The woman looks at her soup; she looks at him; she nods. On a seat next to the couple are magazine and book. Stasis is balance in disguise; it is wobble holding its breath: woman, teeth, sandwich, eyesocket, motorcycle, country, man, soup, book, chair, magazine, children, table, curb, face. One moves. The other withdraws. Someone shifts. A motorcycle tilts. The curious gather and watch.

Market

A vendor calls  
out names of

fish; a customer  
haggles with

her. Some fish  
are barely

alive. Mouths  
open and close,

like the purse  
of a customer

wanting to buy,  
then declining,

then agreeing  
on a price.

What severs  
you from the

world, denies  
you the prospect

of encounter—  
You do

not know who  
you are until you

meet another  
with whom,

with grammar  
and terms

from the outside,  
you can dispute

the silences  
of the inside.

Money is passed  
from hand

to hand; what is  
exchanged is

neither bills nor  
fish but time.

A fin touches an  
eye; a mouth

presses on scales  
as if to say—

let's go out  
in time. Move

to open; the sea  
departs from

itself with each  
wave; the sea,

wave by  
wave, tells

you what it  
has in mind.

## If You Can't See My Mirrors I Can't See You

—sign on van

We walk apart along various streets, lost from each other's view, then see each other again elsewhere, perhaps courtyard, perhaps alley. Pedestrians, pushcarts, jeepneys, poles, wires, tricycles, and vendors clutter the scene. If we shift our lines of sight, we would, obliquely and fleetingly, be visible to each other. For instance, if you buy bottled water in a shop, I would see you, on a mirror where ceiling meets wall, take change from your pocket. Perhaps on a window of a barbershop, you can see my reflection. But the city is ruthlessly solid: a shoe left on the street, telephone poles on which one finds phone numbers of plumbers, façades of buildings whose paint has half-peeled. An origin of the word *mirror*: *speculum*—reflective surface—from which is derived—*speculate*. Along R. Hidalgo are houses of the turn-of-the-century well-to-do. From these houses in the city centre used to come piano music, sound of sculptors' hammers and chisels, smell of smoked meats and caramelised sugar, hushed prayers at dusk, sound of capiz windows opening then closing. Now houses are taken over by the poor. Scholars say that after the Second World War, the rich went elsewhere in the city, the poor settled in spaces that once smelled of tobacco smoke and fabrics made of fine pineapple fibres, tramlines that the war destroyed were never rebuilt and so came jeepneys. This is how a scholar speculates: he finds facts as solid as things—aluminum, tin, glass—and changes them into possibilities as miraculous as mirrors. Some, though, would no longer call this scholarship but artifice. From an overpass on Quezon Boulevard, I see you walking along stalls of pirated DVDs, bicycle shops, videoke bars, vendors of underwear, vendors of knives. Facts can be gathered the way a mirror gathers detail or a place gathers noise, silence, floodwater, shadows. Mirror also comes from *mīrer*—to look—from which is derived—*mirage* and *miracle*. You once asked me: where is the moistness in your poem. It was like asking: where in your city is its history. Moistness is something discerned from an angle. Tell all history but tell it slant. We are again lost from each other's view but once in a dark room I saw two films projected at right angles to each other. The images screened were that of two filmmakers filming each other as they walked in opposing directions. Even though they walked in spirals—one inward the other outward—they kept their cameras focused on each other, keeping each other in view even as they were moving away. Telephone wires are entangled with electric wires, alleys with boulevards, cul-de-sacs with streets, pedestrians with prayers, miracle with mirage, poor with war, I with you. With entanglement comes moistness. One sculptor, unlike others, did not leave. He continued making statues of religious figures for processions, churches, houses. The Black Nazarene statue at Quiapo Church had fallen into disrepair, the parish priest asked the sculptor to make a replica. Each year, in January, from noon to night, the statue would go around the streets of Quiapo in the midst of crowds. Crowds wanted to catch a glimpse of the suffering Christ. People would throw cloth, handkerchiefs, towels, and shirts at the statue's attendants, who would wipe these on Christ's face then throw them back. To attend a procession is to fulfill a vow. To vow is to be entangled with God, from an angle, amidst the smells of crumpled towels and sweaty shirts. When the new statue was done, the sculptor and parish priest paired the old body with the new head, new body with old head, we do not know on which version our sorrow is wiped, to which version we pray, videoke music becomes louder at dusk, jeepneys move on the ghosts of tramline routes, we speculate, spiral, the city stands at a tilt and an angle, a camera is a crowd of mirrors placed at an angle, after which come moistness, replica, mirage.

"Poetry is read on faces. Therefore it is urgent to create new faces."

—from *Potlatch: International Lettrist Review*

Driving to the countryside you and I see  
on the bed of a pick

•

The face is the page on which the city writes. A woman, for example, wrinkles her nose as she walks past rubbish. A man's eyes narrow into slits when a car door opens and hits his legs. Another man smokes while waiting for a jeepney. When it arrives, he throws his cigarette into an estero. Things happen at the same time to people who have no knowledge of one another:

up ahead of us a small house.

Will

•

occurrences are simultaneous yet separate. A paragraph is a city. Both are as capacious as they are ruthless. A group of boys destroys an old house. They tear floorboards, rip out wires, smash windows, wall panels, pipes, blocks. Nothing remains except the brick façade. The boys tie one end of a rope to a house post, another end to a lorry. From the sidewalk, one would not suspect

we be like the house or the pick up.  
We'll be

•

anything. When the lorry leaves, it takes down scaffolding and bricks. Sometime before this, the owner says, "It is held together by opposing forces" when one boy asks what keeps the staircase from falling: nothing seems to support it. Near the rubbish, a man is sleeping on cardboard. The passenger who opened the door apologizes to the man. A helicopter hovers above a building. The



like the road.

Sure. Our house will have wheels then.

•

jeepney is full. Several passengers stand on the sidewalk. One of them counts her change. Faces on billboards atop buildings look content. Books infested by termites are fascinating. Seen up close, the paths termites make look like esteros going inland. Termites are blind; they are drawn to the smell of paper and ink. What were once cities of paragraphs are now islands of words. A

Perhaps. You never know. Let's hurry to

bed, faster than a house.

•

book once held by stitching is now held by saliva and excrement. What holds someone together as he walks. He may be crumbling. He may be kept together by opposite forces. His face is like a façade before crashing. He is blind to others around him. Perhaps the cyclist passing him has left his lover and is going back to his wife. Perhaps policemen in the station have theft in their minds.

Ferrante and Teicher

Let's diminish  
ourselves into

•

He loved their music; notes rose to the upper register like bubbles in champagne. He didn't know that before they became popular, they wrote music for prepared piano. They put paper, sticks, rubber, wood, and glass between strings and bed. This made the music muffled, dissonant, cracked. They abandoned this approach to make pleasant music: the kind played on Sunday afternoons, introduced by a DJ who had a voice like a sedative. He hated dissonance, thought of it as noise. Things had to have order. His medicine box had compartments—this pill for Sunday, that capsule for Monday. Be punctual, he said, not late. Be neat, not slovenly. Be moral, not dissolute. He would listen to music after dinner. During dinner, he would talk about taxi drivers

dissonance.

Two notes half a step apart, two voices half a room away.

•

who didn't give exact change, neighbors who showed off, officials who stole money. I would nod, rather than say anything. She once told me: don't make him angry, if his blood pressure rises, he might die, do you want to kill him. This seemed ruthlessly logical: if I angered him he would die, if I kept him calm he would live. One angered him the way one angered a piano: by inserting an object between its strings. I once angered him by going to the roof to look at stars. Poetry was a possibility fairer than prose. The poem takes the small fleeting thing of the self and can remake it with such force it would seem infinite and eternal. With the force of imagination I thought to remake Big Dipper into Magnifying Glass, Orion into Octopus, Black Space Between

Play this chord to a resolution. Let silence  
be inseparable from echo.

•

Stars into Where All Secrets Go. He shouted for me to come down, his voice above the swell of music, the late night news from the neighbor's house, the din of tricycles. To calm him she gave him dried apricots. The surroundings were quiet: antennae on roofs, firewalls between houses, TV glare on windows, an official denying involvement in a scam, the presenter reporting calmly. Without this prospect, I once thought, the self would cease yearning to be whole. But there was music to be made even on unprepared pianos. When I came down, years later, to the house of prose, his pills and tablets were mixed with apricots, the capsule for Wednesday was in the slot for Friday, the cover of the medicine box was open like the lid of a piano.

## Making Scenes

She and her husband once lived in Sagada, a mountain town half a day away from Manila. The town was so remote not even cellphone signals could reach it. One day, two friends visited. After dinner, they would choose a film and reconstruct it entirely from memory. The husband would describe the opening scene. She would comment on music, then on the transition to the next few scenes. One friend would talk about cinematography. The other friend and the husband would recreate dialogue. Often, they would contest each other: at this point, the camera shows the entire room, not a close up of the lovers' faces. The *mise-en-scene* is cramped; the relationship is stifling. That may be so, but silence makes the room seem larger. Why is footage of a housing shortage riot included when most of the action happens in corridors, rooms, kitchens. It was like putting together a cut up map of a city where there is so much rain, and using that map to go through a city where there is so much sunlight.

Distance makes artifice possible. Someone may mention details—wet empty streets, lampposts—when, in fact, it may have been otherwise. Someone may tilt the angle of her telling too sharply. Someone may impute melancholy when there was none: rain fell as a man and a woman, who may or may not have been lovers, were having noodles in an alley, talking. When she told me this, we were in Manila: it was a sunny day and she sounded happy. Now, she, her husband, and I are elsewhere. It rains all the time. Memories fade like towns in a map folded so many times that their names vanish into the creases. In my room I write them scenes I can remember. Edges of details seem to fit, but the image formed seems inaccurate, as when four people in a room talk about a scene's angle of light and roughness of noise, while outside, the night is as dark and still as a grand perhaps. Nobody contests me. I produce ghosts to make solitude bearable. Remembering starts with shortage, then ends in perplexity. Memories emerge from, then disappear into, the folds of artifice: long take, depth of field, dissolve.

### *Ora Pro Nobis*

After the child was shot, the man carried her in his arms. The crowd in the background did not leer and gawk like extras in a spectacle. No music, only ambient sound. The camera focused on the man carrying the child. Silence was a character imposing itself on the scene. It was as silent as watching a cloud taken apart by wind coming from this direction, then that.

### *John en Marsha sa Amerika*

When the policeman chanced upon John, he had already taken a leak. "Hey fellow," he said, "that's against the law." John said, "No, it's against the wall." Reverse consonance, by then, had fallen out of fashion, but the policeman was amused and let John go. Passersby kept to themselves and walked along, though if this had not been a comedy, they would gather—at a distance but within earshot—waiting for an arrest to be made.

### *Batang West Side*

In a dream, water jars fell one by one from a balcony. A woman walked across the foreground, taking several minutes to cross from end to end. Her dress trailed behind, her shadow was beside her. Water splashed on the pathway. Pieces of jar scattered on the ground, like severed ears straining to hear her shadow's faint footsteps.

*Batch '81*

"Did Martial Law help or harm the country," the master asked the initiate strapped to the electric chair. The batch was ordered to watch as the master hit the switch. Little did the batch know that this was a test: should they obey the master and watch their friend get shocked, or should they disobey and get expelled. The wide angle shot took everything: the master's face, the batch's hesitation, the initiate's voice, help help help. Look at one of them pressing against the frame as if he wanted to break through to another life.

*Darna*

Narda ate the stone, shouted "Darna!" and became Darna. She could defeat the villain who had snakes instead of hair. She could run fast and rescue people in distress. She could fly: watch her image (close up) superimposed on a view of the city (panorama). An anagram is a sign of distress: a riot rearranges crowds, an incantation rearranges names, a villain rearranges lives.

*Maynila sa Kuko ng Liwanag*

The man from the province failed to find his lover—Ligaya Paraiso—in the city. In despair he killed the Chinese man who he thought held her captive. A mob chased him down the street. He was unfamiliar with the city. He ran into a dead end. The crowd caught up with him. As he was being lynched, the camera focused on his face. A close up holds in captivity the range of possible expressions. After a few moments, her image appeared—her name, translated, means "Happy Paradise"—then his face and her image faded into black.

*Bayaning Third World*

The name of the national hero was everywhere: matchboxes, streets, funeral parlors. His statue was in every plaza. His books were in all the libraries. "I am just as how you want me to be," he said to the filmmakers who wanted to make his biopic. The mise-en-scene conflated past and present: near the hero were dungeons and prison bars, near the filmmakers were cameras and computers. "But you cannot know me even if you tried." The hero lit a cigarette. The smoke moved from one side of the scene to the other: from there and then, to here and now.

## Short Walks

To walk through a city is to cut it into parts: like a wound or a landscape the city opens, then like a scab or a room it closes. My scholar and I move in a pace so slow it is like postponement. When we walk through a city we hurt it, my scholar says: we make it aware of how much it is against itself. Our shadows are the bruises of buildings, our slowness keeps the wound from healing, our being together means we are prone to surprise: this church, clouds, that house, chance, this sweat, glance, that touch.

Show your face, dear city, then hide, says my scholar. How you reveal yourself is inseparable from how you conceal: it is a gesture called history. My scholar loves a street that leads to a point along a riverbank, ends where another street begins, ages along with its buildings, becomes blind corner, betrays its old name for a new one. In the ache of opposites, the city knows it is alive: crowd and solitude, old and new, beauty and decay, feeling and fact, silence and noise, grasp and emptiness. Make sense of this with me, says my scholar: if we talk to the city, how the city responds is a clue to how we shall be together.

I disagreed with my scholar's way of thinking. I wanted to take things apart. In the city there is a steel church whose parts were made in another country and then sent here on separate ships. I thought to do the opposite: pry things apart, set the parts adrift, observe how dismantlement leads to the new: a dialogue between buttress and transept, nave and steeple. The streets which my scholar loved made sense to me, but only after going through a method akin to derangement: arriving at the unknown after a long period of poison, suffering, disorder. Melt the steel of the steeple and create money. Take in water from the river and make thirst. Put two people side by side and produce silence.

My scholar believed that separate things, even if they were in pain, comprised a whole; I believed that the distance between particulars, the space between statues and plazas, the blank between noise and sublimity, a gap between a river and the knowledge of itself, had to be maintained by force: the parts would cohere only when they could overcome the force that kept them separate. But this would entail so much violence that when the parts merged they would no longer be recognizable. In other words: ugliness. In other words: the new.

On the day we parted, my scholar said: in another time, walking was slow incision, people walked led by tortoises. Umbrellas, boots, liquor, curl of shopkeeper's moustache, history of objects on display: the slowness made shapes and sounds and stories clear. I cannot describe my talent for causing a swiftly-ruined thing, but for penance I took walks, without tortoises but pilgrim-slow: hence these words that follow, hence silences, hence the blanks that link you and me, hence crowds, hence clues, hence a kind of motion that opens shut things, as when one is in a room collapsing into the size of departure, one sees bodies approaching each other—which one is me, which one is you—like lips of a wound that never close into a kiss.

### R. Hidalgo

Cliché to say crowds reside in a loner cliché to say in you  
 there are multitudes cliché to say a crowd is an image of loneliness look  
 at that woman going down the underpass who will she be once  
 she emerges on the other side like an aphorism about to fall in love  
 with gossip.

### Anloague

For years he built houses made of wood and thatch and when stone and tile became fashionable he swam down the river and was never seen again.



## Quiapo

There are two statues. The head of the first  
 is true. Its torso and limbs are copies. The torso  
 and limbs of the second are true. Its head  
 is a copy. If I tell you which one goes out every year  
 to be touched by crowds you would see  
 how much of you inhabits me. Truth copy  
 limb crowd twin touch copy torso.

## Bilibid Viejo

Hands tied, eyes blindfolded, feet bound.  
 Passersby talk about where they had gone.  
 Listening is the only way you can travel from now on.

## Estero Cegado

I was open.

In consequence, moments were taken from me without my knowing.

I was unkind.

Nevertheless, desire looked at me from head to foot.

I was occupied.

In the meantime, from inside buildings voices spoke into mirrors.

I did not know how to love without ruining the other.

In another city, shadows teach

light how to shine by refusing to cast themselves on surfaces. In the absence  
 of shadows light burns more brightly, out of horror.

## Hormiga

Perhaps smallness perhaps longing perhaps the linking  
 of streets perhaps laughter perhaps satiation perhaps  
 a way of entering another wherein compassion was  
 indistinguishable from violence perhaps pausing  
 perhaps a glance perhaps breathing perhaps another.

## Ongpin

A walk is a form of tenderness not slow enough to mean *let's be still*, not fast enough to mean  
*let's flee*.

## San Sebastian

There was little time left before parting.

We stayed there the longest.

It has withstood war and earthquake for it knows how it began:

in pieces, complete only in the mind, then in fragments coming in—pillar, steeple,  
buttress, altar—parts of a lack longing for the opposite of upheaval,  
one by one arriving from far away.

Static

When songs,  
 He stuns flies; fluid oozes from their abdomens. He places flies on the  
 advertisements,  
 ground and waits for ants. Some flies recover and escape; most do not.  
 and programmes  
 With their mandibles, ants grab flies' legs and inject venom into their  
 end, I begin.  
 bodies. Some flies flail, but stop resisting when the venom takes effect.  
 Resemblance  
 The ants take the flies back to their colony. He wants to see where they go  
 to wash and  
 but they pass through cracks in the wall. The ants left behind encircle the  
 hiss of sea. I  
 remnants of the fluid. He does this during late afternoons in childhood; in  
 flow into places  
 the film, he is working on a teleportation system. The system is comprised  
 parched in silence:  
 of two telepods connected to cables and a computer. The system can  
 shoe racks, compost  
 teleport an object but not a living thing. The computer programme breaks it  
 pits, door  
 down into atoms, transmits then reconstructs it. The computer does not yet  
 hinges, spaces  
 know what flesh is. Flesh breaks down but cannot be put together: what  
 between raindrops,  
 enters as dog emerges as tissue, fluids, bone, whimpers. It is only after he  
 the interval  
 falls in love that he understands flesh. He reprogrammes the computer. He  
 between thirst and  
 teleports a baboon. He then wants to teleport a human—himself. He goes  
 water. Unlike  
 inside one telepod, the door closes, sparks fly, the other door opens, smoke  
 a wave I neither  
 comes out and so does he. However, he does not know that a fly is in the  
 arrive nor depart, it  
 telepod with him. The computer, instead of putting them together  
 is the water that  
 separately, fuses them. He knows something only in terms of another. To  
 moves, not  
 refer to points in a map is to disclose parts of the self. What has happened  
 the sea. I have  
 to one's body gives another a glimpse of a city's history. When he was a  
 no tempo no  
 guerilla during the Second World War, he was, it was said, impervious to  
 tone no melody  
 bullets. He had taken an amulet which supposedly had the power to make  
 no lyrics yet I  
 bullets miss their mark. He would run between buildings, hide behind

inhabit hearing  
 trees, and after encounters, his comrades would find bullets lodged in bark  
 the way faint  
 and brick, but not in his flesh. In the telepod, man and fly merge; in the  
 lights haunt  
 body, an amulet is lodged within tissue, fluids, bone; in a paragraph,  
 the eyes, or how  
 elements enter, flail, resist, become embedded to each other and then  
 a farewell  
 break away, it is the speech among elements that makes the silences of the  
 lingers in the  
 design. A few days before he dies, he coughs up a small rough black  
 station after lovers  
 object. She prepares herself for his death: that's it, she says, he's near the  
 board separate  
 end. Medals, citations, and wedding photographs are on a wall, what  
 trains. I am  
 enters as stone emerges as amulet, there are places where the paragraph  
 the sound  
 turns to break, he who stuns flies is the I who writes in disguise, man  
 of cliffs  
 becomes fly, without the amulet he dies. He at first does not die, but he  
 crumbling at  
 does not remain human. As days pass, parts fall off—nails, teeth, nose—  
 the embrace  
 and other parts change: hair becomes tough as wire, saliva as corrosive as  
 of waves. I  
 acid. He crawls on walls and the ceiling. He breaks his dinner down with  
 am in the straits  
 saliva, sucks the fluid, vomits it, then sucks it back in. He tells his lover—  
 of night's  
 I'll hurt you if you stay—so she leaves, but not for long, he who becomes  
 bandwidth,  
 fly stuns his lover undisguised, we move towards each other and corrode  
 between the  
 into closeness. It is not yet night, it is no longer love, I am not yet me, we  
 trough and  
 are no longer in each other's mornings, not yet in each other's moments,  
 crest of my  
 it is the instant that moves and not time. The body is made up of decay. A  
 voice until  
 poem is assembled out of voices taken from various mouths. A moment  
 morning takes  
 carries another moment in its mandibles. The future is the present passing  
 away the ocean  
 through cracks in the wall. On the other side, let me merge with who I am,  
 of my speech.  
 and come out undisguised.

## Café

Voices approach, voices recede, voices keep  
time with the rise and fall of hands. Cups catch

coffee machine phrases. A teaspoon stirs the speech.  
As we speak of memories of San Sebastian—

all steel—our hands add shape to the scene:  
an open palm is a stained glass window,

a sweep of the hand is a nave, fingers pointing  
to the sky are spires. Our gestures make parts

of the past approach the present: a church assembled  
long ago standing on the ground of the moment.

The story ends, gestures stop, the spire is suspended  
in the sky of silence. We sip drinks, slice bread:

the crumbs on the plate like the negative of a night  
photograph: black stars on a white sky.

•

Perspective is containment: a way to keep  
things in place. Pitcher of water between  
packets of creamer. On the wall: posters  
of latte. A body contains its hunger.  
Along the walls and in the room's  
center: tables and easy chairs. On the  
corner, a plant and a glass door leading  
to the street. Silence contains sound. A barista  
brews coffee, calls someone's name. You have  
lived in several cities, I have lived in only  
one. To touch someone is to escape from  
a self with which one is exhausted. A calendar  
contains time. The image of our faces, caught  
in the curves of separate spoons.

•

Desire withheld  
festers into

a wound, I  
cannot keep

it in, I must  
keep it in.

I am a  
stained

glass window.  
Sunlight releases

colours. Each  
pane is held

by leading  
and frame.

•

Reflection on the  
window: my arm  
superimposing  
itself on yours. This  
is desire in double  
exposure: as I place  
the napkin on  
the table, the image  
of my hand rests  
on your arm. As you  
brush hair from your  
eyes, your fingers'  
reflections follow  
the curve of my face.

•

She had lived in many cities; Manila was the most difficult. It was hot and humid; she had few friends; it was hard to reach out. One night, she had been so lonely that she joined a contest on the radio. She spoke to the DJ for a few minutes; a voice was enough—a sign of human contact. He asked later if he could talk to her off the air. She had an accent he could not place: American—British—Australian—Filipino? Part of her past may be revealed by her accent; her history is contained in the small room of her name.

•

Stories like these draw you to her. Stories like these also make you silent. She opens the door of a story but does not invite you in. When you don't say anything, she understands it as you giving her permission to speak. She knows you're in a relationship: you won't come any closer but you're drawn, the leading and frame keep panes separate, she has lived in many cities, you have lived in only one, and because the voices around you have risen to a spire, I tell her stories softly and she keeps quiet. Silence is the trouble before a door.

•

Pronoun shifts fascinate me: they signify shifts in perspective. A shift in perspective is an attempt to free the self from itself. A friend and I once talked using the third person: "V\_\_\_\_\_ did his laundry this morning and is exhausted." "M\_\_\_\_\_ had a busy morning too; perhaps V\_\_\_\_\_ and M\_\_\_\_\_ should have coffee now." Another friend overheard us, we asked if he wanted to join, he declined: "It was unnerving, it was like listening to dead people talking, I wanted to stay alive." To free the self from itself is to separate the wound from the skin of which it is part. The space separating wound and skin is the space separating door and room, touch and escape.

•

	She says:
He says nothing. I	"We've been
hold the door open. You	hanging out so
enter. He follows you	much we're almost"—
into the room of a new	she smiles—
city but I do not let you see	"like husband
the look I have	and wife."
on my face.	

*Eskinita*



We look at ships in  
the harbour but cannot hear



She suspends objects from the ceiling of a room: fork with bent tines, melted comb, scrap metal, twisted candelabra, burnt wood from house-post, umbrella with broken ribs. Vendors, pedestrians, carts and carriages cross the river on the suspension bridge between warehouses and factories, plants and offices. Without a bridge in the sentence, objects cannot cross. Disorder is a higher form of precision. Logs take months to transport: farmers cut trees only when they have time after planting; logs are taken to the river through slippery paths in the forest, then brought to the city on rafts that float downstream; carabao-drawn carts drag logs to the site. Soldiers blow up bridges; the enemy cannot bring artillery to the other side. A river is a mirror: on the bank stands a factory, the water reflects its ruin. A quotation is an act of rescue. Some sentences take centuries to get here: trees

the sea. Illumination without sun,  
image without cloud. We want



from a forest, logs down a river, planks and posts in a house, fragments from a ruin, voices from an archive. Objects have gone through an explosion: she gathers them in a shed, has the shed blasted, collects them and suspends them from the ceiling of a room: shard of mirror, headless doll, sheet music with burnt edges, bicycle handlebar. The ice plant has a whistle which blasts thrice a day; we mark time by the blasts: first, we start work; second, we have lunch; third, we go home. We take pictures of houses, bridges, buildings, esteros, shops and churches but we never photograph ourselves. Molave becomes hard as a rock when treated in salt water. You can never set these lands in order. The plant is damaged and is never rebuilt; the city loses a way of telling time. Manila used to be sixteen hours behind Madrid, then eight hours ahead, the king would wake up before the subjects had

time to be as still as  
the wall we lean



had supper, now the subjects are awake while the king is asleep, without a bridge in the sentence, empires fall down, factories surround the light, cannons are suspended from the ceiling of an edict, crowds are shadows on the wall. A sentence means there is a future; a paragraph means there is a past. A river is a mirror: along the bank walk pedestrians; their reflections are cut in half by cascos. A stall selling hammers, screwdrivers, saws, chisels, tape measures and wrenches. Dulumbayan is not the edge of town. Termites stay away from ipil because it is bitter. Time is made up of moments when history says yes to its shadow. I dream of a walking tour of Manila: the streets are arranged alphabetically, the itinerary has no grammar. We are nameless and all names are ours. An object is a history in miniature; a sentence is time given shape by grammar. A declaration of love in whispers,

against when we kiss. We want  
time to shrink to



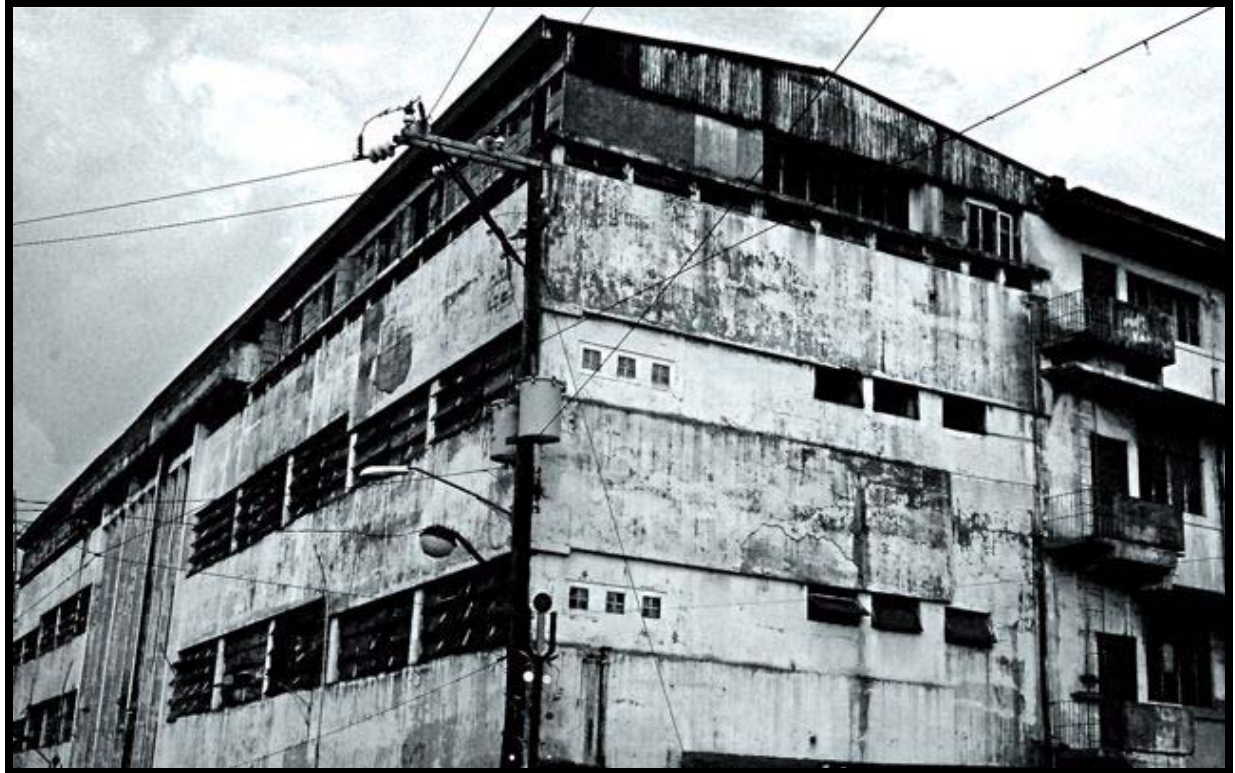
made amidst a crowd. A light bulb in the centre of a room; objects suspended from the ceiling surround the light; there are shadows on the wall: a bicycle handlebar hangs beside a fork with bent tines, between burnt wood and a shard of mirror is sheet music, on the wall, shadows are indistinguishable: are the shadows from the candelabra, doll, comb, umbrella or you. An eskinita is a street as narrow as a car; it is a shortcut between two larger streets. In Carvajal, an eskinita linking Nueva to Juan Luna, stalls sell dragon fruit, cabbage, meat, tofu, fish. In an eskinita lies an umbrella without its canopy, its frame without springs, its ribs broken. A narrow street that becomes a dead end is called an interior. He describes a photograph that no one has ever seen. A river is a mirror: along the bank walks a couple, the water reflects a crowd. History is a descent of names; for every hero, there is a bandit

the size of your room—after sex  
you get up



whose rifle has vanished along with his face. A moment becomes crystalline when it is taken out of time. An alphabet is an entanglement of letters. Sentences gather around the light in a room: is the poem the light, the sentences, or the shadows. How it's transmitted, not what is received. In the interior, the aroma from your neighbour's adobo becomes the flavour of your pinakbet, their dispute about money becomes the tone of your laughter. I suspend images from the ceiling of a poem; images surround the light; there are movements on the wall: a barge passes under a bridge as it goes out to sea, a boy leaps from the bridge and lands on the barge's wake, he shouts to his friends as they wave from above, as he treads water, the barge passes the place where the ice plant's whistle would blast for an hour on new year's eve: the past does not leave, the future does not arrive, without a bridge

to wash, I go  
to the kitchen to boil water



between photographs, images cannot cross. Incorporate both fracture and explosion. Houses have grilles with lyre motifs, eaves to block the rain. I suspend voices from the ceiling of silence: I listen to them, I read them and invent them, I tear them from mouths and pages and my mind, voices surround the light, histories are echoes without coherence, cry of a bandit coming from the mouth of a poet, we are landless and all horizons are ours, we are voiceless and all languages are ours, a tree becomes posts and planks, stone becomes turret, a bridge after a blast becomes scrap metal and twisted girders. If change does not come, there will always be assassins, says the assassin who throws a grenade at a gathering in Plaza Miranda. If this country does not surrender, there will always be cannon fire, say the ships anchored off the bay. Even if luminous details are left unnoticed, there

for coffee, now in  
my room, I see a clocktower



will always be poetry, say the names that descend into the crowd, looking for the bodies from which they were torn. If religion is suffused in despair as salt is suffused in the sea, there will always be a crowd, says the crowd that pulls the statue through the shortcut. Refraction, not reflection. Make each sentence as polished as a mirror, then crack the paragraph. The idea becomes hard as a rock when treated with lineation. The actress is so famous that when she passes by, instead of shouting, the crowd falls silent. The old does not leave, the new does not arrive, an ideology as narrow as an interior results in grief as wide as our names. A dilapidated cinema is a ruin occurring in slow motion. Inside the castle, there are men who have been waiting for months for a chance to board the ships: in the afternoons, they look at turrets and crenellations, enjoy the breeze from esteros on

and the mountains beyond. Time  
resists its own coherence. I



which there are no longer any cascades. The moments accumulate; a day is filled. His itinerary expresses what he cannot say with his words. Quiapo—'Soria—'Venida! I dream of a book about the silences of Manila. We are faceless and all expressions are ours. Manila needs a good scrubbing. The river is a mirror: history flows, reflections are still. She says *seize power* but what she leaves unsaid is *never let it go*. He says *seize power* but what he does is to disperse it for all. Across the oceans they send cannons, gunpowder, fuses, arquebuses, pikes, lances, forges, soldiers, shields, salt, wine, vinegar, flour, almonds, religion. You live in time ahead of mine; there, the moon is out, the tides are low, ships retrieve their anchors from the sea; here, the sun has yet to set, mist lifts, people have their meals as they recline on grassy fields. The relief on the façade plays the lyre as she looks at the street below: in



keep this in mind. A kettle  
with a loose handle.



Escolta, there are horse-drawn carriages, men in suits, vendors bearing baskets of fruit, sweet unheard melodies, whir and hum of gears and chains of paternosters, in Carriedo, vendors shout, speakers blare music and films, motorcycles putter, strings of lyre are entangled with telephone wires, kite strings are knotted to electric wires. Beneath the writing, there is music. A line break is departure. If there are no line cuts, there are no farewells, if lines are entangled, there is encounter without end. History is a poorly-lit interior. Mannequins without torsos speak to statues without heads: we are lifeless and all changes are ours, we are motionless and all voyages are ours, we are sightless and all visions are ours. There is no place that the commodity does not see you: you must change your life. I go behind the altar of Quiapo Church not to kiss the exposed foot of the statue of

Time unclasps from itself—handle severed  
from kettle, water falling



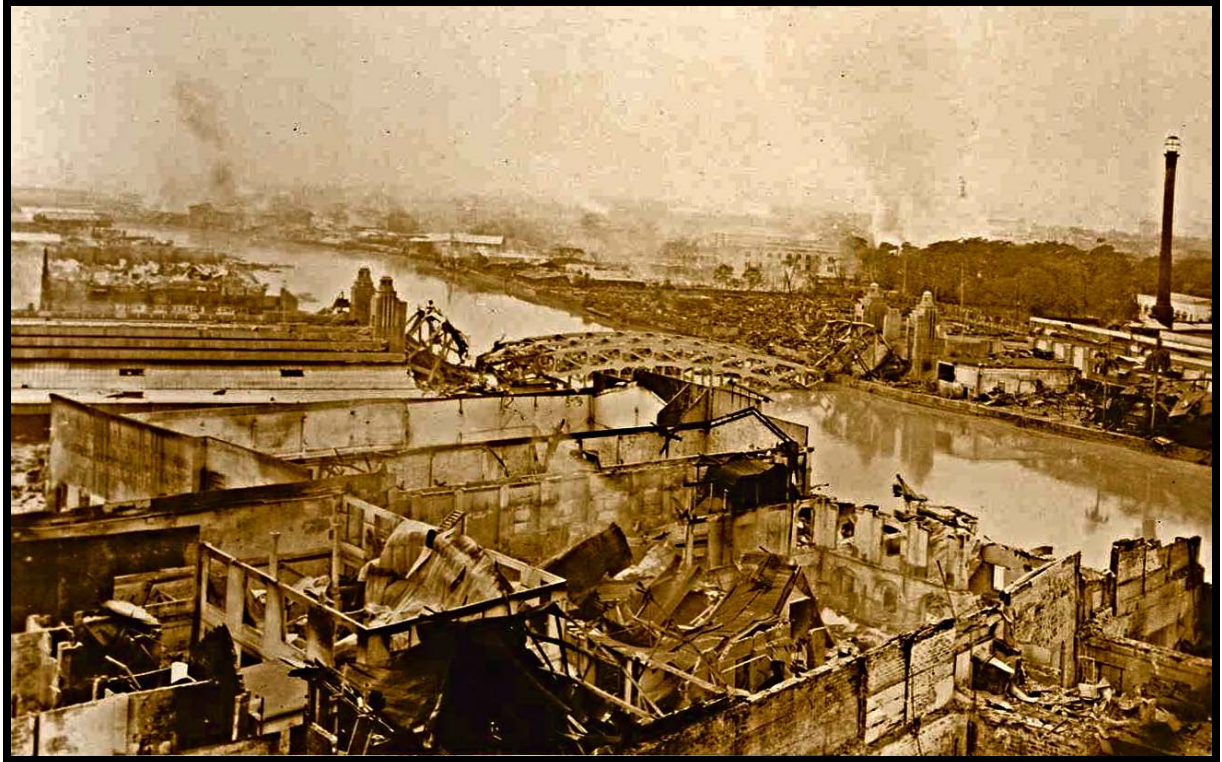
Christ, but to photograph the crowd. These photographs are real: a statue with wings, a relief with a lyre, a tram beside a car, a book devoured by termites with a castle left untouched, crenellations and turrets, a city's ruins, seen from afar, that resemble an infested book. The weapons accumulate; a ship is filled. Time is made up of moments when buildings say yes to their ruin. They drink gin in the middle of the day at the courtyard of what was once a grand house, where now the marble is cracked, the grilles rusted, the floorboards rotten. A river is a mirror: on the bank stands a palace, the water reflects its decline. The past speaks with syntax as bent as a fork's tines, with words as rotten as floorboards, with language tilted towards the zero hour. The faithful accumulate; a church is filled. What I cannot express with my words, I imply with a turn in the sentence, a turn in

to the floor—time is remade  
by scalding itself into



the road, a turn of my body towards you, sometimes away. An ocean is a higher form of rainfall. Nobody knows who drives the vehicle of history: the happy few, the great unwashed, the unseen hand, the forked tongue. A river is a mirror: reflections of faces flow to the sea. An archive is a place where time is arrested as it tries to turn into dust. No shadows without solidity, no commodity without nightmare. You can tell when houses are built by looking at the materials with which they are made: stone and mortar, volcanic tuff, wooden boards treated with salt, marble, planks joined to wooden frameworks by nails and wedges, brick, lime plaster, adobe, concrete, plywood, carton, roofs of sheet metal held down by wheels without hubcaps, floors of thin wood where an estero can be glimpsed through the cracks. The cornucopia is held by a statue without a head, Manila disperses

scattering. You run  
to the kitchen, ask if I'm all



with no design. The governor-general no longer leaves his soldiers in Escolta when he wants to meet with the archbishop. The heartaches accumulate, an interior is filled. We have yet to wake up from the ruin of history and walk wide-eyed through the debris of the present: voices are suspended from the ceiling of our dream, you may fire when ready, this nation can be great again, there will always be an assassin, the Filipino is worth dying for, we are futureless and all tomorrow is ours, a possibility with no plan becomes a future with no design, by the esteros of Manila we sit down and weep, to stop time I must touch you, to make time move you must leave, you pack your echoes in a suitcase, you gather moments in a room, have the room blasted, an explosion in the form of departure, images are suspended from the ceiling of our sleep, balloons, musk, a woman crossing the path of a

right, I say yes, wiping  
the mess, the clocktower's hands



tram going to Santa Ana, a man in a white suit arriving at the foot of the bridge, shards of glass from the Crystal Arcade, masks from the carnival, camera lenses with no body, eggplants and lettuce, echoes of blasts from the ice plant, when time stops, the new comes in, when history pauses, the nightmare is prolonged, if time is as quick as light, then history is as swift as shadow, yet we are condemned to desire: camera, river, ruin, music, wine, bridge. We are changeless and all ruins are ours. He detests the building but each day he has his meals in the café inside; if you abhor the building, he is asked, why are you inside it everyday; that's the only place in the city, he says, where I do not have to see it. When the river overflows, people drown, cars are swept away, houses are inundated: the city becomes a mirror and we are submerged in our own image. In a crowd, voices wake us.

have not moved, the mountains  
 compress themselves into moments, in



Kwek-kwek, adidas, IUD, betamax, bananacue. I invent an image of the city from the silences of many words. In Escaldo, nothing burns. Instead of tiles they start using galvanised sheets; they found out that during earthquakes, tiles would fall on people scampering below. You can tell time by the density of the crowd: after mass, people leave the church and fill up the street, lovers have their palms read by the fortune tellers along the edge of the plaza, children buy balloons from roaming vendors, people buy amulets along the road next to the church—for luck in finding love, a figurine of a couple embracing; for bravery, a medallion with a severed head of a saint, for invisibility and imperviousness to harm, a vest with prayers in pig Latin. Couples exchange notes via a thin rope that traverses the interior; messages move back and forth like little placards. For here,

a poem, everything  
that I hold dear gathers to persist,



there is no place that the crowd does not see you; you must change your life. The true Manileños are against Manila. In Globo de Oro there is no gold. Histories are voices passed from mouth to mouth; a man with a saw hands over a plank to a man with a chisel, their shadows indistinguishable on a wall that says yes to its ruin. The architect, after seeing renovations of the church he designed, weeps: the pillars were taken down; instead of a nave, this looks like a train station. You can tell time by how fresh the produce is: lettuce and cabbages glisten in the sunshine, scales of fish like facets of jewelry. The products accumulate; a stall is filled. Quiapo lulutang-lutang. Postmodernity is the failure to be absolutely modern. You can tell time by the length of shadows: buildings surround the light, shadows of eaves and screens fall across desks and beds. A fragment becomes expressive

moments like clothes packed  
in a suitcase. When a map



when it is taken out of history. A photograph is an image that says yes to its imprisonment. The peasants wearing vests of pig Latin are fired upon by soldiers whose patrons are smarter than others, whose treasures accumulate, whose houses are filled. At the end of the interior, there is a statue of the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus on top of a globe; the globe rests on the shoulders of stone men. They walk from the door of the church to the altar, their arms outstretched; inside the church, prayers collide but never reach their destination. You can tell time by looking at the vendors; candy wrappers resemble wilted petals. A photograph juxtaposed to a paragraph may cause unrest; a mirror next to a river makes waves wet. Look for allegories at your own risk. Walking is an act of erasure: but even if walking backwards is like eating your words, it still won't bring you back to the past.



is folded, cities come closer;  
when clothes are unpacked, cities



The stall selling caps next to the stall selling knives. Inside the abandoned cinema, the curtains are torn, the seats are gone, and there is a pile of wood where the stage used to be. A poem is an entanglement of sentences: shadows of wires resemble entangled strings of broken lyres. Each street has a specialty: R. Hidalgo for photography, Raon for music, Villalobos for strings, beads and trinkets. There is no place that the voices do not reach you; you must change your life. The ones who fight with swords and arquebuses strew salt on the land of the ones who fight with spears and shields: no crops will grow on soil filled with salt. Vendors of old coins and currency, vendors of fake diplomas. I'd rather have a government run like hell by poets than have it run like heaven by politicians. The voices accumulate, a mirror is filled. Construction is a higher form of interpretation. Scissors and

fall apart. Love is not  
in coming or going but



combs in the barber shop, sewing machine and cloth in the tailor's room. Slippers, leaflets, shirts, and placards are what's left on the street after gunfire. A camera is a higher form of mirror. This estero is worth dying for. Bridges suture wounds: a river is a gash through flesh. A mirror is a higher form of deception. This estero can be great again. Some esterros are smarter than others. The moment of capture is a moment of blindness and separation: the shutter closes, light is refused entry, the shutter separates the photographer from the world. The dilapidated cinema is called Times; this is, in the Main, an allegory disguised as a film shown in Lyric, where actors move in slow motion in the Avenue, lost in the crowd as Ever. He kisses the foot that smells of musk and oil—perhaps he can have a good life. A photograph you take of me does not record a moment of intimacy; it is a part of separation.

in the unfolding—in ways  
unknown—of now, then, hereafter:



The river is a mirror: on the bank stands a fort, the water reflects its dungeons. The smarter ones, who cross bridges and notice handlebars bereft of frames, chains, wheels and gears are fired upon by the ones in power: then death, the smell of candle wax, the sound of prayers, a higher form of deception, we must change our lives. Beneath the sidewalk next to the castle, there are statues. The rubbish accumulates; an estero is filled. She kisses the hand on which hang sampaguita garlands—perhaps her daughter will get better. From the street with amulets we walk to the street with beads; from the street with camera lenses we walk to the street with fake diplomas. Stained glass windows are a higher form of scripture. Some are smarter than others; what are we in power for. Beside the church, vendors of abortifacents. He dreams of writing a serial poem whose elements are structured by jeepney routes, whose subtitles are

wind comes near  
the water, waves unfold from the sea.



that of street food. An archive, despite its blindness, is an extension of my sight. The smell of candle wax, fried peanuts, lugaw, sampaguita. The farmers who cut mahogany from forests are fired upon by soldiers whose heartaches accumulate. The true poets are against poetry, we are desireless and all longing is ours, a moment is a higher form of time. The ones in power erase the voices of the ones not smart enough to be assimilated. I'm surprised you've gone this far without wine. I'd rather have a poetry scene run like hell by the moderns than have it run like heaven by the ancients. Beneath disorder, there is design, between gashes in the vests of pig Latin you find our names, between an object and its photograph you find our histories. A placard is a higher form of prayer. The chemicals accumulate; a photograph is filled. A city shapeless without frames, an interior limitless without mirrors, a sea depthless without shadows.

Form, Historiography, and Nation  
in Nick Joaquin's *Almanac for Manileños*

## **Introduction: Time Lines: Framing the *Almanac for Manileños***

Nick Joaquin's *Almanac for Manileños* (1979)—"a calendar, a weather chart, a sanctoral, a zodiac guide, and a mini encyclopedia in the world of the Manileño" (viii)—occupies a neglected place in the Filipino author's canon. Unlike Joaquin's more popular and critically-acclaimed works—for instance, his play *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* (1966), his collection *Prose and Poems* (1952), and his novels *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961) and *Cave and Shadows* (1983)—his *Almanac* has received scant public and critical attention, attracting only one review by Doreen Fernandez ("What Nick Joaquin Knows"), a couple of pages of discussion in E. San Juan, Jr.'s book-length study *Subversions of Desire* (8-9), and a note of praise in Resil Mojares's biographical essay for the Ramon Magsaysay Awards Foundation ("Biography"). By contrast, his play *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, for instance, has been staged hundreds of times in the Philippines and in the US—first in 1955 by Barangay Theater Guild, and recently by Repertory Philippines in 2009 and in Vineyard's Dimson Theatre in New York in 1997—and was adapted into a film by Lamberto Avellana in 1965 ("Biography"). The play has also been the subject of a chapter in Carolyn Hau's monograph of nationalism and Philippine literature, as well as the topic of studies by the scholars Jaime An Lim, John D. Blanco, Edilberto de Jesus, among others.

One factor in the inattention to Joaquin's *Almanac* may be his choice of form. In contrast to the crucial place almanacs had occupied since their inception in the medieval period in Europe—when they could influence public perception and precipitate social change—contemporary examples of the genre still retain their information-bearing capacity, but not their social importance. As demonstrated by the scholars Bernard Capp, Alison Chapman, Keith Thomas, and others, almanacs had been part of the daily life of their readers, often used as guides to roads and fairs, meteorological and astrological prognostications,

sources of amusement, and markers of social conduct. Apart from Ben Schott's miscellany and almanac series, recent examples of the genre include *The New York Times Almanac* (2010) and *The World Almanac and Book of Facts* (2010). The Philippines has, for instance, *Filway's Philippine Almanac* (1991) and *The Philippine Banking Almanac* (2000). Although these examples are characterised by the plethora of information which typifies the genre, nevertheless, the almanac, in journalist Stuart Jeffries's view, is "essentially inessential. Nobody needs to know, for example, that the quantity of beauty required to launch a single ship is one Milli-Helen—but it is, none the less, a nice thing to learn" ("The Bare Facts"). Even though Jeffries was writing in view of Schott's almanac series, his assessment nonetheless may come to bear on other instances of the form.

For Joaquin, producing the *Almanac for Manileños* in 1979, it is a curious formal choice to make—certainly a "nice thing" to produce, but seemingly "inessential"—especially when contrasted with his success in other genres such as fiction, journalism and drama. For instance, on the strength of his fiction, Joaquin received international critical recognition: in 1955 a fellowship in creative writing from the Rockefeller Foundation enabled him to work on his first novel *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* and to travel to the United States, Spain, as well as—with additional funding from the Eugene F. Saxton Fellowship from *Harper's Magazine*—to Mexico. In 1996, he won the Ramon Magsaysay Award—considered as the highest honour for a writer in Asia—for his literary writing and journalism ("Biography").

This is not to say that Joaquin was unaware of the almanac genre falling out of favour with the reading public. In 1968, for instance, more than a decade before he published his *Almanac*, Joaquin wrote an essay on Honorio Lopez, compiler of the *Kalendariong Tagalog* [*Tagalog Calendar*], one of the most successful almanacs in the Philippines. Despite the auspicious and dramatic beginnings of the *Kalendario*—in 1897, Lopez published an early version, *La Sonrisa* [*The Smile*], in the face of prohibition from the Spanish authorities

("Honorio" 47-48)—Joaquin nevertheless noted the decline of the form: by 1968, the Lopez almanac was "practically a lone survivor in a deserted field," what with almanacs "hav[ing] gone out of fashion" ("Honorio" 54).

Consistent with the scholarship of the European and American almanacs, Joaquin comments on the usefulness of almanacs as a vital reason for their popularity during their heyday. The "old-time almanacs" writes Joaquin, "used to be the most widely read publications in the country, the top bestsellers year after year," so "popular because [they were] so useful" ("Honorio" 44). In fact, the competition against the *Kalendario* was so fierce, writes Joaquin, that in 1918, Lopez "had to put in a warning to the public to beware of his competitors," who allegedly "merely copied the [1917] Bristol almanac" and were offering to unsuspecting readers material that was already one year old ("Honorio" 54). The relevant and timely information contained within their pages secured the almanacs' popularity: "weather forecasts and traditional dates for planting" ensured their usefulness to farmers, timetables for "tides and the phases of the moon" made them a handy guide for fishermen ("Honorio" 44). Apart from information, almanacs also offered "horoscopes, riddles, prophecies, vatic verses, . . . puzzles and trick drawings" ("Honorio" 44): for Joaquin, the early 20th century almanacs in the Philippines provided delight as much as data.

What must be considered, therefore, is not simply a close scrutiny of the *Almanac's* formal properties—the calendars and essays which constitute the bulk of its content—but also an examination of its situatedness in Philippine history. Published in coffee table book format in 1979 by Mr. and Ms.—whose editor Eugenia Apostol eventually established, in 1985, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, one of the newspapers which openly opposed the Marcos regime—the *Almanac's* publication seemed both curious and significant. In one of the most tumultuous periods in Philippine history, here was one of the country's most respected writers—Joaquin had been awarded National Artist for Literature in 1976, a proof



of recognition from the Marcos government—producing a compilation of essays, calendars, and prognostications on the country's history, culture, and society in a form that was arguably antiquarian and "essentially inessential." Despite the obsolescence of the genre, however, Fernandez points out that in Joaquin's hands, the *Almanac* becomes a suitable vehicle for Joaquin's prodigious knowledge of Manila and the Philippines: the book, for Fernandez, "is in effect, what Nick Joaquin knows, remembers, [and] has found out about Manila." She identifies Joaquin's tendency for the encyclopedic: in Fernandez's view, the *Almanac* seeks to articulate Manila's "total climate and ambiance, as created by history, society, folk culture, need, custom, whim, [and] time" (19).

For San Juan, this encyclopedic strain was inseparable from questions of aesthetics. He points out the essential difficulty in Joaquin's project—the "amalgamation [of] discordant facts and incompatible topics"—and notes how the *Almanac* comes to terms with the plethora of material by "superimpos[ing] a cross-referential analogical unity on a vast encyclopedic catalogue of material" (*Subversions* 8). For San Juan, Joaquin's cognizance of the almanac's temporal organising principle enabled him to frame, structure, and engage with the mass of materials at his disposal. In addition, it was precisely Joaquin's mastery of the material—a knowledge of the city's "churches [and] brothels, politicians and criminals, fashions high and low, past and present"—combined with his innovative use of form that led Mojares to remark that the *Almanac* "has not been matched by anyone" ("Biography"). Unfortunately, even if the *Almanac* has not been equalled by anyone, neither has anyone else—apart from these three scholars—given Joaquin's book the critical attention it deserves.

Perhaps it was the gravity of the historical moment that made it easy to overlook the *Almanac*. For historian M.D. Litonjua, although the expressed goal of Martial Law was to "unshackle the economic and political life of Filipinos from the fetters imposed on them by the oligarchy," what transpired was the opposite: Marcos "subordinated the entire apparatus

of the state, particularly the military, to his personal command" (386). His regime refused to accommodate any resistance: Marcos "dismantled all countervailing institutions, demobilized, and disarmed the opposition, and jailed those whom he could not coopt" (386). With the elimination of resistance, the "coercive power of the state" was used to enrich Marcos's family and cronies.

For political scientists Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, Martial Law was used by Marcos to create a so-called New Society. Abinales and Amoroso describe how Marcos was able to do this by having "two powerful centralizing agencies" at his command: the military and a group of "technocrats who shared his idea of national development." The military, on the one hand, conducted "brutal engagement[s]" with dissenting forces such as the Moro National Liberation Front, a Muslim separatist group, and the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Technocrats, on the other hand, tackled all aspects of governance: as instruments of "expanding executive power" technocrats were involved in managing land reform, economic planning, oil production, mass transportation, fertilizer production, and other services and industries (207-209).

For Benedict Anderson, specialist in Southeast Asian Studies and theories of nationalism, Marcos "pushed the destructive logic of the old order to its natural conclusion." Instead of lording it over a "myriad [of] pocket and rotten boroughs," writes Anderson, Marcos presided over a "rotten country, managed by cronies, hitmen, and flunkies." But unlike "his predecessors [who] had lived out the genealogy of mestizo supremacy—from private wealth to state power," Marcos, who to begin with, wasn't immensely wealthy but instead "came from the lower fringes of the oligarchy," saw the "possibilities of reversing the traditional flow of power." For Anderson, Marcos was attentive to how power in the political realm should be centralised in national institutions: "in our time[,] wealth serves power, and that the key card was the state" ("Cacique Democracy" 213). Hence, Marcos centralised state

power unto himself and ensured the loyalty of his technocrats by offering them key positions in his government. Anderson describes the moribund result of this combination of repression and plunder: by the latter part of the 1970s, "the technocrats were a spent force, and the urban middle class became increasingly aware of the decay of Manila, the devastation of the university system, the abject and ridiculous character of the monopolized mass media, and the country's economic decline" ("Cacique Democracy" 215).

According to scholar and poet Ed Maranan, activist writers during this period responded to the coercive tactics of the state by establishing underground presses, publishing "in samizdat-format or mimeographed hand-outs, in tabloid form." A booklet from the period—*Ulos* [blade strike]—featured "poems satirizing the regime or expressing revolutionary optimism, vignettes or sketches about how people were surviving under the repression, essays on the culture of liberation, news about victories in the people's war, and other items" ("Against"). Equally interesting was what Maranan calls the "literature of circumvention," where materials critical of the administration eluded the "state machinery of censorship" and appeared in government-sanctioned publications ("Against"). For instance, the poem "Prometheus Unbound" by Ruben Cuevas (pseudonym of journalist, screenwriter and poet Jose F. Lacaba) was printed in *Focus* magazine. Although "Prometheus Unbound" seemed "too sophomoric by half"—the treatment of the figure from Greek mythology too "profuse" and "seemingly overwrought"—the poem contained an acrostic which was unnoticed by the magazine's editor: the first letters of each line spelled out "Marcos Hitler Diktador Tuta." This slogan was often chanted in demonstrations and the last two words were distillations of the most virulent critiques against Marcos: that he was a dictator and a puppet of the American government ("Against"). Alternative print forms such as samizdat publications, tabloid forms, and the so-called mosquito press [publications which criticised the Marcos government despite the risks involved], as well as seemingly innocuous aesthetic

forms like acrostics were ways in which the literature of circumvention was propagated. Although my study is not concerned with an account of the conditions of underground publishing at the time—and Joaquin's publisher, Mr. and Ms., despite its oppositional stance, was nevertheless aboveground (the house published Nick Joaquin's children's books, for instance)—it is vital to point out that Joaquin wrote in a form which enabled him to be encyclopedic without being monolithic, entertaining without being facetious, interrogative without being agitational, historically engaging without being politically grim: the *Almanac* made it possible for Joaquin to be concerned with the minutiae of the nation while at the same time be critical of the machinations of the state.

Joaquin's neglected *Almanac*, therefore, will be framed within the then-prevalent discourses of national identity and nation building, and examined in the light of its fragmentary and multi-generic qualities. I claim that far from being a marginal element in Joaquin's oeuvre, the *Almanac*, by virtue of its innovative handling of form, interrogates both internal and external considerations: by offering an image of Philippine history as heteroglossic and comprised of discrepant temporalities, Joaquin raises questions as regards fixed categories of history and national identity. Joaquin's *Almanac* offers a non-linear and idiosyncratic view of history and identity which is beholden to neither state-sponsored nor left-leaning developmentalist versions.

Such a complexity necessitates an equally nuanced approach towards the *Almanac*. To account for the *Almanac*'s propensity to incorporate—and to place into interrelationship—discrete genres, I turn to the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia. To come to terms with Joaquin's fragmentary way of representing Philippine history and culture, I take my cue from the German literary and cultural critic Walter Benjamin's concepts of fragmentary historiography. Moreover, I situate Bakhtin's and Benjamin's concepts within

discourses pertaining to Joaquin's aesthetics and history, specifically, and issues of Philippine historiography and nation formation, in general.

To be sure, Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia was formulated in relation to Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels. However, there are places in his analysis where Bakhtin opens up his categories to illustrate not just nuances and distinctions within the Dostoevskian novel, but also within the works of "almost any prose writer" ("Discourse" 298) and for "the writer of artistic prose" ("Discourse" 278). Bakhtin suggests that the potential for heteroglossic discourse—the "language diversity of the literary and extraliterary language"—is open to various prose genres, the almanac included. Moreover, what is equally crucial is that for Bakhtin, heteroglossia is not confined to simply the aesthetic aspect. Bakhtin incorporates in his analysis the notion of "socially heteroglot multiplicity": a view that takes on board not just the "internal contradictions" of the text, but also the "unfolding of social heteroglossia *surrounding* the object" [emphasis in original], the presence of the "mixing of languages that goes on around any object" ("Discourse" 278). This concept of formal and contextual heteroglossia—especially when coupled with Benedict Anderson's assessment of print-capitalism as a way in which nationalist ideas may be disseminated—is crucial to my study as it enables me to articulate relations between the refractions manifested in Joaquin's *Almanac* with the conflicting discourses of historiography and nation formation occurring during the period of the *Almanac*'s production. Specifically, as I demonstrate in the second chapter, Bakhtin's notions enable me to articulate the *Almanac*'s multiple—and by extension, refracted—temporalities expressed in the calendars, which are oriented to the past and the future, vis-à-vis the essays, which have fragmentary timeframes. Moreover, as postcolonial critics Homi Bhabha and Timothy Brennan point out, the heteroglossia of the novel may be seen as an analogue to the "national longing for form": like the novel, the nation seeks a shape in which articulations of identity, history, politics and culture may be accommodated

and repurposed for its constituencies. The heteroglossia of the *Almanac* stands against other monologic—in historian Reynaldo Ileto's terms: "developmentalist"—kinds of historical writing during the 1970s.

Benjamin's notions of fragmentary historiography were originally intended as a critique of orthodox Marxist conceptions of history. Benjamin identifies three aspects of historical writing that he finds objectionable: a way of writing history that was "shaped by a conception of progress which bore little relation to reality but made dogmatic claims." For Benjamin, these aspects were: (1) a notion of the "progress of humankind itself"; (2) a notion of the "boundless" quality of human progress; and (3) the "inevitable" outcome of progress: "something that automatically pursued a straight or spiral course" ("Concept" 394).

For Benjamin, this "progression through a homogeneous, empty time" (395) found its expression in narratives that privileged linear and causal structures; hence a critique of progress is inseparable from a critique of the expressions in which such a conception of progress takes. Moreover, as I demonstrate in my second chapter, Benjamin's critique of linear progress and historiography is in agreement with a similar reassessment of Philippine historiography undertaken by the historian Reynaldo Ileto. For Ileto, a linear conception of history was utilised by both the repressive Marcosian state and the progressive, radical left. Ileto claims that such narratives expressed the ideology of "developmentalism." By contrast, he proposes a formulation of history which accommodates the oblique, tangential, and obsolete: to recover and restore them into the field of historical discourse.

My thesis accounts for, and develops more thoroughly, the aspects indicated in this introduction. The trajectory of the study is as follows. In chapter one, I first identify the basic elements of the almanac genre such as the calendar, the chronology, the prognostication, and other forms such as the essay and the maxim. The accounting of these items leads to an examination of how these elements were repurposed by various compilers

throughout history. I argue—by using examples from the Ukrainian, French, British, Russian and Filipino context—that the almanac was a dynamic genre that was shaped by—and responded to—issues germane to the various historical moments and geographical locations in which it was embedded. Moreover, the almanac may be viewed as an example of print-capitalism: it was a textual form which enabled the spread of ideas like nationalism. Finally, I extend the analysis of Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, Benjamin's concept of fragmentary historiography, and various ideas of nation formation elaborated on by Homi Bhabha, Timothy Brennan, and Benedict Anderson. From the vantage point of these conceptual frameworks, Joaquin's *Almanac* may be seen as an internally and externally complex text: attentive to and engaged with—by way of its innovative form—specific aesthetic and national concerns of its milieu.

The second chapter focuses on my reading of the *Almanac*. The first section has a number of interrelated aims: first, I situate the *Almanac* within the career of Nick Joaquin and, more specifically, within the context of Martial Law, and demonstrate how Joaquin's work consistently addresses and engages with the prevalent social and cultural discourses in his time; the second aim is to demonstrate how Joaquin's response to his milieu is protean and multi-form: his *Almanac* is but another way in which his engagement is made manifest. The third aim is to analyse Joaquin's views of historical writing, as demonstrated by both his own statements as well as the critiques he received through the years. The final aim is to analyse Joaquin's views of form—again as seen in his own statements and in commentary. The analysis in the first section relates to a number of the claims made in the first chapter, as well as looks forward to the heart of the interpretation itself: I acknowledge the need to see Joaquin's work in general—and the *Almanac* in particular—within the specific historical and national milieu to which he responds, and the need to unpack the categories of aesthetics and historiography as regards Joaquin's writing.

In the second section of chapter two, I describe in detail key aspects of Joaquin's *Almanac*—the calendars, the horoscopes, and the essays—from the point of view of Bakhtinian heteroglossia. I argue that although Joaquin accommodates multiple genres in his almanac, these genres simultaneously interact yet maintain their integrity: a demonstration of structure and suppleness. The third section examines in a more specific way the calendar element of the *Almanac*. In this section I claim—taking my cue from Benjamin's categories of correspondence—that Joaquin's calendrical composition is Janus-faced: first, the calendar items are comprised of both national and religious elements; second, the calendars are oriented simultaneously to both the past and the future: calendar dates as both commemorative and prospective.

The fourth section examines the essay element of the *Almanac*. Here, I anchor my discussion on Benjamin's notion of dialectics at a standstill: I demonstrate the ways in which the essays in the *Almanac* function as bits and pieces of a historical montage, and that these elements—by virtue of their fragmentariness—offer a non-linear conception of Philippine reality. The final section discusses Joaquin's innovative methods of composing the calendars and essays of the *Almanac* in relation to linear forms of historiography. I argue that Joaquin's formal fragmentation has political correlations: his heteroglossic writing interrogates fixed and linear conceptions of historiography, and therefore, offers an alternative way in which the Filipino nation may view itself.

In the main, my dissertation argues that Nick Joaquin's hitherto neglected *Almanac for Manileños*—when examined within the moribund tradition of the almanac genre, and through the radicalising optics of Mikhail Bakhtin's views of heteroglossia, Walter Benjamin's reflections on history, and notions of the intertwining of literary form and nation formation—expresses the multiple, and not singular, temporalities that constitute and complicate the Filipino nation.



## Chapter 1: Contextualising and Theorising the Almanac Genre

An almanac is both repository of, and response to, multiple forces in its context. This response is reflected, in part, in the almanac compiler's handling of content, and structure. In this chapter I make three related claims. First, rather than viewing the genre simply as an antiquated and inert container into which the compiler placed various elements, I argue that the compiler—as demonstrated by the choices he makes as regards form and content—addresses the context in which the almanac is embedded. Second, I argue that the almanac's heterogeneous formal aspects—and their interaction and engagement with each other and with larger issues in society—function in a manner akin to Benedict Anderson's views on the formal and contextual characteristics of kinds of print-capitalism such as the novel and the newspaper. In short, like these two forms, the almanac may also be considered as a textual intervention in discourses of nationalism. Lastly, I argue that elements from theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, Timothy Brennan, Homi Bhabha and Benedict Anderson offer new ways of seeing Nick Joaquin's *Almanac for Manileños*, underscoring the link between innovative form, fragmentary historiography, and nationalist discourses in the Philippines in the 1970s. In the main, therefore, by focusing on the case of the *Almanac for Manileños*, my study aims to articulate the relations between the almanac genre, forms of historiography, and nation formation.

### Planetary Motions and Road Directions: Elements of the Almanac

The almanac's function as repository is indicated by the scholar Alison Chapman, who describes the genre as, "at its most basic . . . a calendar that includes useful information" ("Almanacs"). The information which the almanac could accommodate ranged from "tables

of astronomical and chronological material" (seen from the medieval almanacs onwards) to "compilations of handy reference material" (of which Ben Schott's almanac series is a contemporary example) ("Almanacs").

Similarly, the historians Bernard Capp and Keith Thomas point out that, since its inception, the almanac has been marked by its information-bearing capacity. Capp identifies, beginning with the European "manuscript almanacs of the Middle Ages," the propensity of compilers to include "ecclesiastical information" such as the "dates of festivals of the Church" (25). Also, "astronomical and astrological events of the coming year" such as "movements and conjunctions of the planets and stars in the zodiac" (25) were incorporated. Thomas observes that apart from astronomical, meteorological and ecclesiastical concerns, the almanac in the Middle Ages included "miscellaneous information" that was nevertheless crucial to readers' daily lives: "a list of markets and fairs, a guide to highways and distances by road, a brief chronology of notable historical events since the Creation, medical recipes, legal formulae, hints on gardening" (347). Even on the level of miscellany and minutiae, material from the almanac addresses readers' quotidian concerns and highlights the genre's usefulness.

As time passed, the almanac began to include "advertisements for books, patent medicines, or teachers of mathematics" (347); Thomas locates this opening up to a larger variety of material in the mid-17th century. Chapman identifies this move slightly earlier (starting from "the last decades of the sixteenth century") ("Almanacs") and indicates that "further advances in printing techniques"—an observation resonant with, as I demonstrate later, Benedict Anderson's notion of print-capitalism—accounted for the almanac's ability to absorb and disseminate a wider range of topics. "[T]ide tables, tables of interest, tables of weights and measures, 'the Zodiacal man' showing which constellation governed which part of the body, descriptions of roads in England, weather predictions, agricultural advice, advice

about diet, days propitious for purging and bathing, a list of English kings and queens and their reigns, and chronological lists of important historical events since Creation" were among the concerns which fell within the range of the compilers' concerns. This list, Chapman says, is merely a "representative sampling" of the miscellany compiled in any given almanac ("Almanacs").

But it would be limiting to view the almanac simply as a formally inert genre, an antiquarian receptacle into which the compiler would place oddments and assortments, ephemera, flotsam and jetsam. Throughout its emergence and persistence as a genre—Ben Schott's *Almanac*, for instance, was named Book of the Year by *The New Statesman* as recently as 2005 (McGrath)—the almanac has been inseparable from its context, and the compiler has been aware of the demands of its readers, publishers and gatekeepers, and geographical specificities. Rather than functioning as a neutral container, in Chapman's phrase, of "an unprecedented array of information" ("Almanacs") the almanac—and the various elements which comprise it—has been subjected to political, social, and cultural pressures of its specific historical moments. For example, the scholar Lisa Andries observes that while some almanacs during the French Revolution may have succumbed to "inertia" and became calcified by the contingencies of their time, other almanacs in the same period had the "capacity for innovation." This potential for newness was resonant with then-current upheavals: "the Revolution," according to Andries, "marked a point of rupture and radical transformation for this medium" (206). In other words, the almanac—and, by extension, its materials and its compiler—was prospectively a shaper of, as much as it was shaped by, its moment. Hence, to interpret an almanac's form and content requires an investigation of its embedment in time and place, the historical and geographical specificity in which it appears.

Although it may seem that the almanac could accommodate a wide variety of materials and thus fluctuate formally, scholars have nevertheless identified periods of generic

stability. In terms of the English almanac, Capp locates one such period of stabilisation during the Elizabethan era; this was when the "almanac rapidly assumed its standard form" (29-30). The opening section "contained the calendar and details of planetary motions," a "table showing legal terms," and the "zodiacal man" (a figure which illustrated various body parts and the corresponding zodiac signs which influenced them) (30). The prognostication followed in a separate section. This included the year's "weather prospects and prevalent diseases, medical notes and data on farming and gardening" (30). In 1556, Leonard Digges's almanac included a list of fairs for the first time; this feature "became common in the following decade." In 1571, Gosenne's almanac introduced road directions, and roughly at the same time, a "table giving the dates of kings since the Conquest" was added. In Hubrich's 1565 almanac, "a blank page facing the calendar for each month" was introduced, and this presaged the almanac's "secondary role as a diary" as well as a way "for the reader to note debts, expenses and other [items] . . . worthy of memory to be registered" (30). Apart from standardisation, what is also evident are the ways in which readers' needs were addressed by the inclusion of certain features. The blank page was meant as a place for accounting—both in an economic and writerly sense—and the tables for weather prospects, lists of fairs and road directions indicate the genre's utility especially in quotidian matters.

In America, unlike in the UK, compilers produced almanacs that were locally specific ("Almanacs") and diverged from the material from their British counterparts, from which they initially borrowed. The early American almanac, according to the scholar Marion Barber Stowell, "gradually developed a flexible format" which reflected the compilers' intentions of "enlightenment and instruction" (*Early* 35). Compilers accomplished these tasks by using "established literary forms—the epistolary preface, the essay, the receipt (or procedure), the anecdote, the narrative, the maxim, the prediction, and—in poetry—the heroic couplet, the rhymed quatrain, and blank verse" (*Early* 135). Chapman says that the American almanac

"evolved into an authentic kind of folk literature"; this evolution transpired throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. That the almanac's placement in different contexts results in variations in form, content, and use is a matter taken up later on in my discussion of the Ukrainian, Croatian, and Russian almanacs. Hence, instead of being concerned exclusively with day-to-day matters, compilers from those places were struggling with issues of culture and national identity, and their engagement with their historical contingencies marked the materials that were included in the almanacs.

In the 20th century, the almanac moved toward "a more scientific, less astrological" disposition. The tendency was to underscore the genre's scientific and empirical dimensions. The ascendancy of reference books like *The World Almanac and Book of Facts* and *Schott's Almanac* are contemporary illustrations of the genre's turn toward becoming an annual repository of data, a "compendium of useful information and facts" ("Almanacs").

Although this section and the one that follows draws examples from a range of almanacs from various historical periods and localities, I do not aim to offer a synoptic, overarching account of the development of the almanac. This section, for instance, aims to identify the almanac's key features; the following section aims to describe how the compiler manipulates these features in response to perceived social, political and cultural concerns in his milieu. Indeed, it is more profitable—as Chapman and Capp do in their studies of the almanac in early modern England, for instance, and as I demonstrate with my reading of the *Almanac for Manileños* during the Martial Law period in the Philippines—to situate the almanac within its specific historical moment.

## **"To Alter Radically How Time is Lived": Social, Political and Cultural Functions of the Almanac**

In the previous section, I described the almanac as, fundamentally, a text that marks time and offers a variety of information. The basic elements include the calendar, the astrological and meteorological prognostication, the chronology, and various pieces of information crucial to the daily lives of readers: for example, a guide to markets, a guide to highways and road distances, agricultural advice, dietary reminders. Over time, and as the almanac form became more widely disseminated throughout various localities, compilers incorporated other genres: the preface, the essay, light verse, among others. The almanac form demonstrates fixity and flexibility: as Chapman observes, the almanac is simply a "calendar that includes useful information." But once unpacked, that disarmingly simple statement proves to be complex: it is precisely its insertion into a myriad of contexts that accounts for its flexibility. The almanac—and the compiler who decides what qualifies as "useful information," for whom this information is addressed, and the effects the materials have on his audience—is both constant and changing, contingent on its specific milieu yet demonstrating a sense of consistency and durability through time.

In this section, I demonstrate how various compilers have used the almanac's elements to perform various roles: social arbitrators, historians, literary editors. I also show how, as almanacs are disseminated in a wider geographical range, compilers conceive of almanacs as, to borrow from Benedict Anderson, "unified [textual] fields of exchange and communications" (*Imagined* 47): a discursive space where emerging and often-contested ideas of literature, society, politics and nationalism are articulated and distributed. Such notions, as seen in studies of almanacs from England, America, France, Ukraine, Croatia and the Philippines, are manifested in the almanac's elements: for instance, changes in calendar

entries signify contestations between various political and national ideologies. As seen, for example, in Chapman's studies on Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar*, substituting Reformation figures for Catholic ones demonstrates a repurposing of the calendar to express English nationalism ("Politics of Time").

The almanac's involvement in the daily lives of its readers as well as in larger social, political and cultural matters means that, like the multiplicity of materials which the genre accommodates, the compiler also plays multiple roles depending on the conditions of his particular historical moment: arbitrator of social behaviour, historian, literary editor, polemicist. Capp, for example, has discerned in some almanac compilers the "obligation to describe"—and amend—"social behaviour" (102). In their prognostications, compilers like John Wing would indicate "impending social disasters" which, should they occur, would have been "provoked" by sinful ways, and "through repentance[. . .] might be averted" (102). At times, compilers would also use their offices to denounce abusive practices. For example, "oppressive landlords" who engaged in dubious practices like "rack-renting, high entry-fines and engrossing (turning two or more holdings into one, a process which sometimes involved eviction and depopulation)" were "condemned" in various passages from almanacs of compilers such as Vincent Wing (105).

What should be emphasised, moreover, is the ambivalence of certain compilers in England as regards their role in society. On one hand, some compilers would take up the cause of the underprivileged and would castigate "groups which appeared responsible for contemporary abuses" (105). Yet other compilers wanted to maintain hierarchical social order and emphasised that readers should "carry out traditional social duties" (105). Compilers like George Wharton and George Parker would go to the extent of indicating that "social hierarchy was ordained by God" and that the "poor must accept their station in life and be grateful for any favours they are shown" (103). These examples are a manifestation of

the genre's ambivalence: the genre had the potential of addressing social and economic inequities (using the almanac as a platform to take up the cause of marginalised) yet the perpetuation of hierarchies was an equally plausible prospect (arguing for the divine basis of social stratification).

Another way the genre participated in its context was when various compilers incorporated history in the almanac. In the British almanac, this generally took the form of chronologies; in the American almanac, historical accounts took the form of essays. Capp says that readers during the Elizabethan period had already acquired a taste for historical works; these materials were already "very popular with the . . . book-buying public." Compilers tapped into this "tradition and extended it to reach a far wider audience" (216). Compilers viewed history as "both 'delightful and profitable'" and sought to make this wealth of material more accessible to the public. Hence they "summarize[d] a mass of chronicles 'into this profitable volume, for the advantage of such as cannot purchase great books'" (216).

The chronology—or "brief history of the world"—was a staple of the Stuart almanac. This feature had "occasionally appeared in medieaval almanacs." Compilers in the Tudor period showed "no more than the number of years which had elapsed since the Creation and the birth of Christ." Thomas Porter's 1585 edition added more entries by incorporating "the dates of the invasions of England from the legendary Brute (or Brutus) to the Normans, and of the foundations of several cities." Capp says that Porter's innovation was a "precursor of later developments" in the almanac. Once chronologies began to appear "in the first years of the seventeenth century" they quickly "became an almost universal feature." The format of the chronology was a "list of major events, with the number of years to have elapsed [since the almanac's publication]" (215).

Capp notes three themes that are prevalent in the chronologies. First is the chronologies' propensity to highlight the "antiquity and pre-eminence of England" (216). A



second theme is the foregrounding of religious history (220). A third theme "implicit in the chronologies . . . was the concept of progress and innovation" (221). To emphasize England's antiquity and pre-eminent past, compilers mentioned "many events from classical history and myth, from the slaying of the Minotaur and the rape of Lucrece to the exploits of Alexander and Caesar." By identifying these details from myth and history and plotting them in a chronology, the compilers "sought to graft British antiquity on to this body of [ancient] history." Capp says that the attempt to forge "desirably ancient pedigrees" was linked to the rise of nationalism: a "growing national consciousness and self-assertiveness" (216-217).

Religious history in the chronology was represented by a list of events that began from "the date of the world's creation," which, for the compiler in the Stuart period, was isolated "mostly between 3900 B.C. and 4030 B.C." (220). Compilers gave the impression of progress by listing urban developments, particularly in London. They included noteworthy improvements like "the foundation of Westminster Hall," the "first wooden and stone bridges over the Thames," the establishment of places like Gresham College, Sutton's Hospital, the Globe Playhouse, among others (221). Highlighting these details in the chronology, says Capp, is not in any way an elaboration of a "specific philosophy" on the part of the compiler. Readers, however, Capp continues, may infer that the list of dates suggested not just "civic pride" (221) but also the "long and steady march of progress" (222). In addition, these themes of nationalism and historical progress link with the concerns in the discussion on non-linear articulations of history in the second chapter: Joaquin's *Almanac* is a demonstration of history in montage, an image of a nation in heterogeneous forms.

Despite the limitations of the chronology—often, the compilers did not rely on up to date materials but referred to the "chronology contained in some earlier edition" (216)—Capp says that the outline of dates in the almanac most likely constituted for the readers "their only source of [historical] instruction" (215). Oral tradition and ballads were also part of the

readers' sources of knowledge, but the almanacs' chronologies, in Capp's assessment, were better because they were affiliated, "however tenuously[,] to the work of professional historians" (215). The chronology, therefore, was instrumental in shaping the readers' understanding of the structure of time and the unfolding of history: in a manner that was succinct and metonymic, the outline of dates and events in a chronology gave order and sequence to the sprawl and expanse of the past, and was a major tool in the formation of the readers' historical consciousness.

In this regard, the chronology was vital not just for its ability to instruct but also to construct a readership along the lines of history, nation, and religion. This ability to assemble not just facts but, equally importantly, a community, is worth underscoring. Chapman, for instance, examines John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*; she claims that both texts are "fundamentally about time" and that "each one foregrounds its ability to alter radically how time is lived and understood" ("Now and Then" 91). By outlining "the rise of Protestantism" and listing the "lives and deaths of the Protestant martyrs," Foxe, Chapman maintains, "intends to change the reader's understanding of the past" ("Now and Then" 91). By contrast, "by ordering the liturgical year," Cranmer seeks to make sense of the future. The *Book of Common Prayer* indicated "in advance what would be said [at weddings], what holy days would be celebrated in the coming month, and what Bible verses would be read on the next Sunday" ("Now and Then" 91). Chapman asserts that there is an aspect of the calendar that is regulative and prescriptive: a "temporal conduct book" that proposes to its readers "how days, months, and years are to be experienced" ("Now and Then" 91).

In a separate study, Chapman describes Edmund Spenser's attempt to fashion a "uniquely English timetable in the service of Elizabeth and English nationalism." She also demonstrates how "popular groups asserted their guild identity by altering the calendar's holy

days" (*Reforming Time*). Hence, the substitution of Reformation figures in lieu of Catholic ones, plotting in advance the liturgical year, using a calendar to privilege English nationalism as well as guild identity underscore the almanac's role in shaping community ideology. This point—the almanac as a way in which ideology may be expressed—resembles Lisa Andries's insights about its role in the French Revolution. For Andries, in her essay "Almanacs: Revolutionizing a Traditional Genre," almanacs during that period served not just as "vehicles of information" but as "pedagogical instruments designed to spread a patriotic morality" (221). Hence, by way of seemingly trivial tidbits of calendrical information supplemented by religious and pastoral imagery, the calendar element of the almanac does not just commemorate dates but also constructs ideologies.

An important trend which Chapman identifies is that of "increasing [geographical] specificity" ("Almanacs"); this turn to locality is linked to the almanac's potential for social formation. Capp indicates the geographical range of the almanac: starting from the 15th century, almanacs appeared in countries like Italy, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, and France (270). The almanac made its first appearance in Scotland in 1603, but developed slowly. Furthermore, the Scottish almanac, "after [including] the calendar, fairs, chronology and weather forecast" did not accommodate "the prophecies or other material which characterized the English works" (275). In Ireland, the "pioneering almanac" was produced in 1587, though Capp claims that regular publication was sustained only during the mid-17th century. In 1639, the almanac became the "the very first book to be printed in North America." Initially hewing close to the conventions of the English almanac, the American version nevertheless diverged from its English counterpart over time. An 18th century sample, for instance, incorporated "farming tips, recipes, essays, verse, humorous stories and sensational, often illustrated accounts of murders, monsters and prodigies of all kinds" (275). It is also vital to note that in 1673, an almanac for Jamaica, then a colony of England, was compiled by John

Gadbury. Although the almanac was produced to bolster the English colonial project—to persuade the English to move there and to invest money—the almanac nevertheless described "topography, climate, flora [and] fauna quite unknown to England" ("Almanacs"). The publication of almanacs in colonies and the representation of life there opens up the prospect of a postcolonial approach to the genre. As Chapman notes, even if—for the benefit of its English readers—the almanac sought to domesticate Jamaica, to naturalise its otherness and "erase any sense of [the country] as an alien place," it nevertheless could not also help but "highlight Jamaica's very difference" ("Almanacs") and underscore the place's alterity.

Benedict Anderson describes a link between the emergence of nationalism and the dissemination of print; this notion offers a way in which the almanac may be viewed as a medium where nationalism may be articulated and spread. According to Anderson, printed materials such as the newspaper and the novel may be considered as two vital "bases for national consciousnesses" (*Imagined* 47). For Anderson, newspapers and novels "created unified fields of exchange and communications" (*Imagined* 47). Through the medium of print and paper, readers "gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands . . . [of] people in their particular language-field" (*Imagined* 47). In his view, these readers "formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally-imagined community" (*Imagined* 47). Taking my cue from Anderson, one way to understand the proliferation of almanacs in diverse settings—the form appeared in Italy, Spain, Germany, Netherlands and France in the 15th century; in Ireland in 1587; in Jamaica in 1673; in North America in 1639—is to consider it as one of the "mechanically-reproduced print-languages, capable of [being] disseminat[ed] through the market" (*Imagined* 47). For Anderson, the main impetus for textual distribution was capitalism: these printed forms—the almanac included, as I argue later in the section—were ways in which a nascent nationalism was articulated.

The implications of the genre's geographical specificity are examined in studies of the Ukrainian, Croatian, Russian and Filipino almanacs. In these contexts, the almanac was a textual way in which social, political, cultural, and literary concerns and tensions were framed, articulated, and disseminated. The almanac thus may be considered a discursive space which was able to accommodate issues like the emergence of nationalism and the need for autonomy. In addition, the intermingling of various genres—the calendar, the editorial, literary forms like poetry—within the rubric of the almanac suggested not only new ways of entertaining the readers with verse and miscellany, but also configuring their views on history, aesthetics, religion and nation.

The scholar Taras Koznarsky outlines the "emergence and development of Ukrainian literary almanacs published in Kharkiv in the 1830s" ("Kharkiv"). The literary almanac was appropriated by Kharkiv writers and editors and "became the main vehicle for Ukrainian literary socialization" during the "second half of the 1820s [to the] first half of the 1830s" ("Kharkiv"). Focusing on the almanacs' bilingualism (Ukrainian-Russian) and location (the sites of production were located "on both the Russian metropolitan and Ukrainian provincial cultural markets"), Koznarsky discerns in the genre a "strong local patriotism" and a "desire for [the] articulation" and establishment of an "autonomous Ukrainian cultural space" ("Kharkiv"). What is crucial for Koznarsky is that while there was negotiation occurring between Ukraine and Russia—in terms of both language and location—the almanac demonstrated a sense of partisanship: it favoured the emergence of a distinctly Ukrainian space. This space, moreover, was interdisciplinary: writers who contributed to the Ukrainian almanacs worked at the "cross-section of history, ethnography, and folklore" ("Kharkiv").

The almanac's characteristics of "inclusiveness and malleability" enabled "various discursive genres" to articulate a sense of Ukrainian identity; this discourse took place "in the context of the Ukrainian-Russian co-presence, exchange and tension" ("Kharkiv").

Koznarsky claims that Ukrainian writers used the almanac as a platform to "produce their own 'authentic' Ukraine"—by reference to, and interfusion of, fields as varied as "history, ethnography and folklore"—and led to a "productive 'imagining' of the horizons of Ukrainian literature" ("Kharkiv"). Koznarsky underscores the ability of the almanac genre to offer a space that "stimulated several generations of literary activists, from accidental novices to those for whom Ukrainian literature became a vocation" ("Kharkiv"). Furthermore, the study also asserts the centrality of the literary almanac "in the evolution of Ukrainian cultural identity" ("Kharkiv"). Finally, Koznarsky characterises the literary almanac as "fragmentary yet expansive, ephemeral yet essentially preservationist, [and] malleable yet potentially disruptive," qualities which gained for the genre a central place in, using Brennan's phrase, the "'national longing for form' in . . . [an] environment where other means of producing a national identity were still impossible" ("Kharkiv"). Koznarsky demonstrates how the form of the Ukrainian almanac was adapted to heterogeneous content and national agenda. By using materials from history and folklore, compilers contributed to the constitution of Ukrainian national identity. Furthermore, the form—"fragmentary yet expansive"—was not just a matter of arbitrarily including fields like history, ethnography, and folklore. Precisely because of the ways in which it could accommodate multiple forms and disciplines, the almanac was an appropriate genre to articulate the changes that were occurring in the Ukrainian context, especially in its dealings with Russia: the emergence of Ukrainian national identity vis-à-vis "imperial . . . Russian civic and cultural identity" ("Kharkiv"). In other words, the almanac's heterogeneity, adaptability, and openness were features that allowed it to become a prospective site for conflicting yet complementary concerns—nation, literature, history, identity—allowing these issues to surface and be disputed, though not necessarily resolved.

In "Architectures of Knowledge and Literary Tradition: A History of the Almanac in Croatia," the scholar Marija Dalbello outlines the development of the Croatian almanac from the 17th century to the 1960s. Dalbello traces the "rise of the annual almanac in Croatia" to the spread of "calendar literacy during the Catholic Reformation and its attempts to spread the Gregorian calendar" (58). The "first known almanacs" appear in the 17th century. By this time, several characteristics are established: an "annual pattern of publishing and use, the association of the almanac with a popular book of the house, and the interactive use of the almanac as a diary" (58). At this point, says Dalbello, the almanac is also linked "with literacy in the vernacular" (58). In the 18th century, the almanac "establishes, in many respects, a connection with the newspaper as a medium for transmission of news" (58). Dalbello also views the almanac industry as a foreshadowing of the growth of "the newspaper trade" (59). Dalbello notes as well that there is interaction between print and oral traditions: news is "transmitted" in ways that correspond to the "patterns of an existing oral tradition" (59). Dalbello's recognition of the similarities between almanac and newspaper—both as a form of conveying materials to readers, as well as an industry—relates to Anderson's remarks about the newspaper (and the novel) as exponents of the print-capitalism that were a factor in the proliferation of nationalism (*Imagined* 37ff).

As Dalbello and Koznarsky claim—like Hryn and Beaven later on—the almanac, like the newspaper, becomes instrumental in social formation: a means, for instance, to "consolidate public opinion in Croatia at the time of the Ottoman withdrawal from Croatia" ("Architectures" 59). The transmission of news was not a neutral circulation of material; for Dalbello, it was the "reliance on established genres of oral communication"—which was used by "secular and ecclesiastical elites"—that helped "shape the memory of recent events in the process of identity-building." Furthermore, the Church also used the almanac as a vehicle for information and indoctrination: Dalbello, for example, considers the "proliferation of . . .

material associated with the Franciscan almanacs" as containing overtones that are "didactic and ideological." Lastly, during this period, as the almanac was establishing itself extrinsically, it was also consolidating itself intrinsically: this period, Dalbello says, was crucial in "defining the generic traits of the almanac" (59).

During the 19th century, the "popular, grassroots character of the almanac, aimed at rural and urban audiences, reflecting small-town, conservative values" was perpetuated (59). However, Dalbello discerns that after 1850, the almanac's relationship between content and audience shifts. The genre attempts to maintain its "popular character, aimed at a common reader," but the content becomes more and more specialized and starts to cater to a "limited audience" (59). The almanac trade, nevertheless, continues to prosper until World War II. After the war, the almanac "all but disappears and does not recover." Dalbello traces this to a growing "marginalization of the countryside and small towns" which occurred concurrently with internal and external population movements: the "growth of industrial centers as a result of internal migrations" and "intense emigration overseas" (59). After 1960, the almanac becomes a "specialized publication" for "regional, religious, and diaspora" contexts, its focus on popular audiences definitively giving way to more specific constituencies (60). What is vital in Dalbello's study is that she points out the almanac's characteristics of dynamism and adaptability—a genre whose practitioners were cognizant of shifts and turns in history, audience, and religious dispositions—qualities which permit the almanac to develop itself both as a genre and as a social force.

In "'Literaturnyi Iamarnok': Ukrainian Modernism's Defining Moment," scholar Halyna Hryn reviews the 12 volumes of *Literaturnyi Iamarnok (The Literary Fair)* (1928-1929), which he claims to be one of "the most significant Ukrainian literary publications of the modern era" ("Literaturnyi"). Hryn locates *Literaturnyi Iamarnok* at the apex "of an intensely creative decade": it was during that period that "European modernist tradition on



Ukrainian culture reached its height." After this moment, Hryn maintains that a "new set of aesthetic principles was introduced" and that the "destruction of [the] pluralistic tradition [of Modernism] was brutal and almost absolute" ("Literaturnyi"). Hryn's dissertation outlines the major "developments of the decade from the standpoint of the public sphere" as well as the space it made "for intellectual debate" ("Literaturnyi"). The study also considers the "concept of *iamarnok*" [an aesthetic which involved humour, a pan-European sensibility, and the cross-pollination of various genres] and the almanac's "physical design (artwork)"; Hryn posits that the "overall artistic direction of the almanac" may be situated "squarely in the mainstream of [then] current pan-European trends." One chapter in Hryn's study considers the "ideology underlying the periodical and its theoretical foundations" ("Literaturnyi"). Another chapter describes the almanac's main feature: its editorials—the *intermedia*. Hryn also elaborates on the "primary functions of [the] genre": which he identifies as "subversion through humor" and the "expansion of parameters for intellectual and artistic discourse" ("Literaturnyi"). Hryn's study is valuable because it takes up intersecting matters like literary history (particularly of European modernism), the emergence of Ukrainian aesthetics, and the function of the almanac in the Ukrainian intellectual circles at the time. The almanac, therefore, in this particular context, played a vital "subversive" role, and helped introduce artistic and intellectual changes into the public sphere.

The scholar Miranda Beaven examines some of the major almanacs of that period, particularly *Northern Flowers*, *Polar Star*, and *Mnemosina*. Beaven indicates the almanac's key qualities; she also places the texts in their historical literary contexts and underscores their effects on readers and the literary milieu. *Northern Flowers*, which ran "for eight years from 1825," included "fragments from longer works," as well as criticism and "fierce literary polemics" (71). The almanac served as the clearing ground for excellent literature and criticism, offering a space for the "judicious introduction of talented young writers" (72). The

goal of *Polar Star*, on the other hand, was "not so much educational as ideological": the editors envisioned the almanac as a bridge that would link the reading public to "the Russian past, with our native culture, our own writers" (72). *Polar Star* was "widely considered" to presage a "new era in almanac publishing," though some later almanacs sought to mute the polemics and lessen the "degree of ideological tension" (73).

This softening of the ideological stance was taken by *Mnemozina*, an almanac "more educational than political in orientation"; this publication sought to introduce readers to "subjects little known in Russia" (in particular: "certain new ideas which have inspired Germany") (73). *Northern Flowers*, lastly, was "generally considered [as] the very best literary almanac of the 1820s" and was the vehicle for "the best Russian writers" (74). Other topics Beaven considers are how almanac compilers negotiated "censorship difficulties." She also traces the transition between the 1820s almanacs and the "thick journals" of the 1830s (76). Another point of interest would be that the almanac producers took steps toward professionalisation: a system of "payment of fees to authors" was introduced in the 1820s (79). Despite the aesthetic advancements introduced by the 1820s almanacs, which were bolstered by their intention to "reach a wider circle of readers and to educate the reading-public," Beaven observes that the compilations did not "make great inroads into the burgeoning numbers of potential readers" (80). The main reason was that the producers of the almanacs privileged "literary quality," and could not "make the sacrifices . . . which would have made [the almanacs] more attractive to the lower classes" (81). Hence, "edition sizes were hopelessly small," and consequently, "prices were high" (80). Beaven—and as seen earlier, Hryn—demonstrates the Russian almanac's literariness, and how the form had educational and ideological implications in Russian society. For Beaven, the Russian almanac was a publication where arguments on literary aesthetics were conducted, new authors and ideas—often foreign—were introduced, professionalisation was attempted, and

readers were educated as regards Russian literature and culture. However, she also points out that the rise of the literary element came at the cost of declining readership.

Finally, the anthropologist Michael Tan writes about Don Honorio Lopez's *Kalendariong Tagalog* (*Tagalog Calendar*), which is a "slim newsprint pamphlet of about 40 pages" and—from the point of view of the social scientist—serves as a "treasure trove of assorted information" and a "way of looking into local [Filipino] culture" (Tan). An agricultural almanac in its 109th edition (in 2007), *Kalendariong Tagalog* contains dates of moon phases, days auspicious for planting, and the time of high and low tides. Tan says that there is a section on astrology, informing readers of the sign for that part of the year, and the typical traits of individuals born under that sign. He also remarks on the "nationalistic aspect of the almanac"; that it contains "historical information" and that the cover identifies a "pantheon of Filipino heroes": Rizal, Burgos, del Pilar, Bonifacio, Mabini and Lopez-Jaena (Tan). In this sense, for Tan, the *Kalendario's* sense of order is articulated by a juxtaposition of nation and nature: the *Kalendario* enables the reader to make sense of the transitions between seasons as well as be guided by the examples of national luminaries.

In Tan's view, what is crucial about an almanac is that it "reflects our need for some degree of control over nature, over our lives." Even if *Kalendariong Tagalog* is addressed to readers involved in agriculture and fisheries, Tan identifies that, in general, what the almanac gives is "some certainty to an uncertain world." Tan says that "simply knowing the movements from one season's phase to another probably gives order and meaning to farmers' lives" (Tan). Thus, for Tan, the Filipino agricultural almanac edifies its readers by way of the information it provides. *Kalendariong Tagalog* offers a sense of order which is, in part, grounded on a foreknowledge of natural phenomenon: seasons, tides, phases of the moon. Furthermore, by including images of Filipino heroes and dates of key historical events, the

almanac also inculcates a sense of history and nationalism—however rudimentary—in its readers.

Apart from its intervention in, and contributions to, matters of social behaviour, history, literature, and nation formation, the almanac also helped construct the political dispositions of its readers. The almanac also held a vital place in revolutionary contexts, and the way the compiler handled the almanac's elements—and, consequently, its effect on the readers—indicates the degree of influence the genre had in terms of introducing and maintaining ideas of political change. The almanac's involvement in disseminating progressive ideas may be seen in the studies that implicate the genre with the American and French Revolutions.

Stowell has examined how the almanac—by virtue of its integration into the "average American's daily routine by the time of the American Revolution"—became implicated in its readers' political formation. Despite its "lowly but ubiquitous" standing, the almanac, says Stowell, helped define "American political thought and sentiment from 1766 through 1783" ("Revolutionary" 41). Stowell asserts that the almanac was an important "medium of propaganda" partly because of the scope of its readership: the almanac, she says, "annually reached many persons who read little else" ("Revolutionary" 41). The most revolutionary almanacs were written by patriots ("Revolutionary" 42) who were often "influence[d] [by] the libertarians"; these patriots found the genre an appropriate ideological platform, and worked towards making the almanac an "ideal vehicle for expressing and promoting the new patriotism" ("Revolutionary" 43). Almanac compilers employed various forms to address their audiences: literary and graphic forms, philosophical essays, humorous poems and cartoons, historical and political essays, and sayings on calendar pages, songs, and cartoons ("Revolutionary" 44). The result was that the almanac readers were "propagandized palatably": their dispositions were shaped by "essays of excellent quality, verse that was

generally no worse than the standard verse of the period, comic illustrations, and satirical comments" ("Revolutionary" 61).

Another example of the genre's agency is evident during the French Revolution. During this period, Lisa Andries argues, a "change in the calendar" signified an "attempt . . . to set up a new world order": the revolutionaries "had the unbounded ambition to impose a new organization of time and space." The calendar, thus, became a "mode of indoctrination" for the reader (mostly peasants): the dates and images served to remind him of the "plant ready to be sowed" and the "agricultural tool . . . to be used" at that point of the year. Despite its potential for generic innovation and the "radical transformation [of the] medium" during this period, Andries also underscores the "ambiguity of this mad ambition to restructure time" through the almanac genre (222): the endeavour, by way of refunctioning the calendar from seven days to ten, to privilege the revolutionary values and sweep away the old monarchic order. Not only that, the fascination with forging anew the social order by means of altering the clock and calendar relates with the point Benjamin makes about "the dials on clocktowers [which] were being fired at simultaneously and independently from several locations in Paris" ("Concept" 395): in this sense, shooting at the clocks epitomises both the standstill of the revolutionary moment as well as the abolition of old ways of measuring time.

Although these almanac examples have been culled from disparate historical moments and geographical localities, they nevertheless are intimations of what Benedict Anderson describes as "the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation" (*Imagined* 30). For Anderson, this technical means of representation was exemplified not by almanacs but by novels and newspapers; such reading materials were crucial factors in galvanising the imagined national community. However, as I indicated earlier in my discussion of Dalbello's study of the Croatian almanac, in the 18th century, the Croatian newspaper trade was already incipient in its almanac industry.

Furthermore, the almanac and the newspaper—as examples of print media—had the ability to transmit and circulate news to a body of readers. The almanac, therefore, despite its omission from Anderson's study, may be considered as an example of a technical means for representing—and disseminating—notions of national community. Seen in this light, Anderson's discussion of the novel and newspaper as forms of print-capitalism—to which I turn below—is instructive in demonstrating the link between the almanac's formal characteristics and the category of the nation.

For Anderson, one of the key formal qualities of the novel and the newspaper was the potential of such forms to "present . . . simultaneity in 'homogeneous, empty time'" (30-31). Anderson demonstrates this notion of simultaneity by citing examples from novels by the Filipino José Rizal, the Mexican José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi and the Indonesian Mas Marco Kartodikromo (32-37), as well as by an analysis of the "extraordinary mass ceremony" of "simultaneous consumption ('imagining') of the newspaper-as-fiction" (39). For instance, Anderson cites the opening scene of Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, where "hundreds of unnamed people, who do not know each other" and are located in various places in Manila are talking about a dinner party (32). This image—people unbeknownst to each other, people who, should they pass each other on the street would not know each other by name yet are cognizant of the same event—is emblematic, for Anderson, of the imagined community. Furthermore, Rizal's novel describes a "house on Anloague Street which may still be recognized" (33); for Anderson, this and other similar place markers will be familiar to Filipino readers and will become points of identification.

In Anderson's view, such devices—the motif of unnamed people bound by an awareness of the same event, a street easily recognised by readers, the turn from "the 'interior' time of the novel to the 'exterior' time of the [Manila] reader's everyday life" (33)—are ways in which the "solidity of a single community, embracing characters, authors and readers,

moving onward through calendrical time" (33) is potentially made manifest and affirmed. In other words, forms of print like the novel and newspaper not only represent, within their pages, the image of a nascent community; by virtue of their distribution, they also offer the possibility of forging such a community.

Anderson's discussion of the emerging newspaper businesses in North and South America makes this process clear: for him, what was represented and expressed in print had its analogues in the then-contemporary context. In Anderson's view, the factors that "brought together, on the same page, *this* marriage with *that* ship, *this* price with *that* bishop" [emphasis in original]—in short, the diversity of materials the editor deemed fit to print—was "the very structure of the colonial administration and market-system itself" (62). Seen in this light, the heterogeneity of topics in the early newspapers was vital to constituting a coherent readership: the newspaper, for Anderson, "created an imagined community among a specific assemblage of fellow-readers, to whom *these* ships, brides, bishops, and prices belonged" [emphasis in original] (62). Like the Manileños who could identify with dinner parties and Anloague Street in Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, readers of newspapers—the "assemblage" that was an integral part of the "market-system"—would find relevance in the various topics and tidbits within the pages.

Anderson's analysis of the link to what he calls "print-capitalism" (as exemplified, in this instance, by the newspaper and the novel driven by market forces) and the emergence of the "specific assemblage of fellow-readers"—the imagined communities that eventually constitute nations—sheds light on the ways in which almanacs forge national constituencies. For Anderson, the "ships, brides, bishops, and prices" were addressed to a specific public, much like the chronologies incorporated by the Stuart compilers or the literary works included by the Ukrainian compilers addressed their own respective constituencies. Although the almanac is beyond the remit of Anderson's analysis, it is crucial to point out that like the

novel and the newspaper—his favoured "technical means" for galvanising community—the almanac was also the textual locus of heterogeneity: the newspaper juxtaposes reports of "*this* marriage with *that* ship" (62) and the almanac accommodates horoscopes, chronologies, and essays. Moreover, the compiler ensured that the materials he incorporated would address his readers especially as regards nation formation.

Three examples from my survey demonstrate Anderson's point about the almanac, as an example of print-capitalism, forging an imagined community of national readers. First, the interfusion of mythical and historical elements in the chronologies of Tudor almanacs demonstrates an endeavour at nationalist historiography. For Capp, the interweaving of aspects of Greek and Roman myth with British history signifies an attempt on the part of the compiler to establish and fortify a national consciousness: readers would become aware of the "desirably ancient pedigrees" (217) from which they came.

Second, Chapman's analysis of Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar* demonstrates how the calendar was "crucial [in] forming the contemporary sense of nationhood." For Chapman, Spenser's "substitut[ion] [of] local English figures for the traditional calendar saints" was a way of "symbolically remak[ing] the Catholic liturgical calendar" by incorporating a "pointedly English history into the patterning of sacred time" ("Politics of Time" 3). Moreover, the calendar was a form, inseparable from everyday life, that "synchronized collective experience, giving a shared pattern to the disparateness and multiplicity of human lives" ("Politics of Time" 3-4). In *The Shepheardes Calendar*, therefore, the "English nation is imagined not only as a set of geographical boundaries or a certain racial identity, but as a body of people who read the same sacred texts and say the same prayers all at once—who have, in effect, a 'common prayer'" ("Politics of Time" 4). Chapman's work, in summary, points out the political agency of the almanac's calendar element: for her, substitution and synchronisation were ways in which English national



consciousness was forged. The forging of this national disposition, for Chapman, was made possible, in part, by two factors: the malleability of the calendrical element as well as the dissemination of *The Shepherdes Calendar*.

A final example would be Tan's comments on Honorio Lopez's *Kalendariong Tagalog*. For Tan, the national element in Lopez's almanac may be discerned in the incorporation of images of Filipino heroes on the pamphlet's cover and the inclusion of historical material in the calendars. In Tan's view, the *Kalendario*, with its emphasis on natural phenomena (tides, phases of the moon, weather patterns) imparted a sense of order to its readers: a notion of "certainty to an uncertain world" (Tan). By yoking the national to the natural, Tan implies that the *Kalendario* offers a view of historical and natural time governed by fixed seasons and regularities.

Anderson's view as regards the connection between the emergence of national consciousness vis-à-vis the formal complexity of printed matter—what he calls, in short, print-capitalism—enables me to make two claims about the almanac. First, like the novel and the newspaper, the almanac demonstrates a sense of formal sophistication. The novel enables discrepant narrative trajectories to be represented simultaneously. The newspaper makes possible the simultaneous presence of different news reports. The almanac allows for the incorporation of various genres within the larger rubric of the almanac form. Apart from arguing for the almanac's aesthetic sophistication, I also claim that like the novel and the newspaper, the almanac is a technical means for constituting national community. The almanac, novel and newspaper are therefore characterised by sophistication as regards internal form and the relation to context: internally, aspects of simultaneity and heterogeneity in these printed materials offer useful analogues for thinking about national temporalities and representations; as regards context, their distribution is illustrative of the ways in which texts

galvanise a constituency of readers and render potential changes as regards ways of seeing and thinking.

Anderson's work, thus, is a bridge that enables me to offer connections between the sophistication of the almanac as a text and its situatedness and responsiveness to a context: his work enables me to theorise a continuum between the internal, heteroglossic form of the almanac and the often-conflicted national setting in which the almanac is found. In the section that follows, I elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of my analysis, paying close attention to notions of heteroglossia, fragmentary historiography and the ways in which form and history are implicated in national representations. Heteroglossic and fragmentary approaches to writing, as I demonstrate in my analysis, are the ways in which Joaquin interrogates the linear and fixed historical representations of the Filipino nation.

### **Precisely Cut Components, Large-Scale Constructions: Heteroglossia, Montage and Nation as Conceptual Frameworks**

I have pointed out the almanac's complexity, which is located in its formal heterogeneity—a text composed of other texts—as well as in its interaction with aspects of its contexts. As seen in studies by a range of scholars, the almanac is a genre that is adaptable, accommodating and responsive to the social conditions in which it is placed. Furthermore, the almanac also participates in social—often, national—discourse: it is a text of many voices embedded in a context of multiple and conflicting utterances.

Apart from having examined the almanac's qualities, it was also crucial to have outlined aspects of its genre history. As Mikhail Bakhtin points out in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, it is important to "return to [a genre's] sources" in order to reach a "correct understanding [of the form]" (106). Bakhtin asserts that any individual example of a

genre contains traces of its generic past inextricably bound to its new, innovative features. Hence, following Bakhtin, in any almanac, one apprehends "old and new simultaneously" (106). Moreover, Bakhtin says that the presence of "archaic" elements—in Joaquin's case: calendars, horoscopes, essays, incidental verse—raises the possibility of their renewal. For Bakhtin, the inclusion of old elements is a sign of their prospective "renewal" and "contemporization" (106). In his view, in "every [contemporary] individual work of a given genre" the form is "reborn and renewed," and even if a particular work is embedded in the present moment, it nevertheless "always *remembers* its past" [emphasis in original] (106). Bakhtin, therefore, is aware that incorporated in the present work are vestiges from the genre's history. In addition, Bakhtin argues that these manifestations are not static, but are—precisely because of their inclusion and interaction with other elements within and without the text—remade anew (106).

What follows is an outline of the theoretical underpinnings of the project. I begin by summarising key aspects of Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia: the interplay and refraction of various voices—often both contradictory and complementary—within a literary text. I then proceed by linking the internal heteroglossia of the text with the social heteroglossia of its context. Bakhtin maintains that, like the polyvocality which characterises a complex genre, the context of which the genre is part is equally multi-voiced. I then focus on several related concepts that complete the theoretical undergirding of my study: Timothy Brennan's claim that nation and novel are comparable in terms of their composite nature; Benedict Anderson's notion of simultaneity and coincidence in national life; Homi Bhabha's concept of the split time of the nation; and Walter Benjamin's proposition that the montage is a feasible way of presenting historical material.

From the outset, let me make it clear that Bakhtin's major scholarly works have been on the novel, not the almanac: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and *Rabelais and His*

*World*. The four essays which make up *The Dialogic Imagination* also deal with various aspects of the novel: its relationship to the epic, a historical survey of the novel, the figure of the chronotope, and the way discourse operates in the novel. It is also evident that the notion of heteroglossia—one of the theoretical cornerstones of my study—was applied by Bakhtin not to any other genre but the novel. However, apart from having pointed out the potential of the almanac to be seen as a heteroglossic text, Bakhtin himself seems to open up the prospect of reading other genres in the light of heteroglossia. For instance, in "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin describes a word set within an "environment full of alien words"; in this context, the word "harmonizes with some of the elements" and, by contrast, relates with the others only through "dissonance" (277). This harmonious yet dissonant relationship with other words is the key factor in the "shap[ing] [of] stylistic profile and tone" (277). What is interesting is that Bakhtin says that this process is applicable to, generally speaking, "*artistic prose*," and "*novelistic prose* in particular" [emphasis in original] (277-278). In the section where he examines "socially heteroglot multiplicity," Bakhtin refers to "the writer of artistic prose" and "the prose artist" (278), before reverting several pages later to "the novel."

Despite Bakhtin's theoretical astuteness, some critics have remarked on the slipperiness of his use of critical terminology. The scholar Bernard F. Scholz, for example, has pointed out Bakhtin's imprecision in the use of his concept "chronotope." Scholz remarks that Bakhtin left his definition unfinalised and open; his examination of historical poetics—of which the chronotope plays a big part—was an introductory rather than a final statement (144). Scholz also says that Bakhtinian terminology is "frequently encountered 'in use', [and] without explicit statement of the rules governing such use." In addition, Scholz posits that the "meanings [of the terms] only gradually unfold as the argument progresses and the examples accumulate" (143). It is in this light that I wish to take Bakhtin's concepts—and, by

extension, the other notions as well—on board: theories as sketches of an incomplete map that shows only portions of the journey.

For Bakhtin, heteroglossia is the "represent[ation]," by way of language, of "socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles" ("Discourse" 291). Scholarship on the almanac suggests the genre's propensity to be accommodating and combinatory: the compiler takes materials pertinent to the concerns of his time and place and arranges them to address not just generic conventions but also the needs and issues of readers, publishers, among others. Joaquin's *Almanac* contains a variety of materials as well. There are monthly calendars which mark Catholic saints' and Filipino heroes' births and deaths, as well as events of historical value for the Filipino. Like some of its precursors in the English context, Joaquin's almanac contains horoscopes though not political prognostications. Miscellany is also featured: recipes, light verse, weather indicators, and folk wisdom. Similar to the Ukrainian and Russian almanacs, *Almanac for Manileños* includes essays which consider Philippine history, culture, society, politics, mythology, and literature. It is precisely this identification of discrete elements—the almanac's topical and generic heterogeneity—and their interaction with each other and with its context that this study is considering.

Bakhtin's comments on the novel's ability to "incorporat[e] . . . various genres" ("Discourse" 320) may be illustrative of the almanac as well. Bakhtin maintains that the novel allows inclusion of genres "both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra-artistic (everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and others)" ("Discourse" 320). Bakhtin goes on to say that "in principle, any genre could be included in the construction of the novel" ("Discourse" 320-321). But while the novel assimilates various genres into itself and encourages their interaction, Bakhtin also argues

that the "incorporated genres" retain a semblance of "their own structural integrity and independence, as well as their own linguistic and stylistic peculiarities" ("Discourse" 321). In the almanac, the reader may identify the various parts that comprise it: calendar, prognostication, recipe, historical essay, chronology, polemics. In a similar vein, the elements of Joaquin's *Almanac* maintain their generic identity. Considerable space is allocated to the essays, whose topics range from concerns like the history of taxation in the Philippines, the development of the educational system, the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan, and the capture of Emilio Aguinaldo. The reader would certainly be able to distinguish these essays from other items like the horoscope, light verse and the calendar; this would underscore Bakhtin's point about the "structural integrity" of the smaller genres embedded in the larger one.

Furthermore, aside from representation, Bakhtin emphasises the "intersect[ion]" of these various contradictory elements, which then lead to "new socially typifying 'languages'" ("Discourse" 291). The scholar Allon White describes this as "the complex stratification of language into genre, register, sociolect, dialect, and the mutual interanimation of these forms" (136). This interanimation occurs when, according to Bakhtin, the heteroglossic elements are subjected by the author "to an artistic reworking": the author considers the "social and historical voices populating language, all its words and all its forms" and "organize[s] it into a structured stylistic system that expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author amid the heteroglossia of his epoch" ("Discourse" 300).

Bakhtin, in addition, gives great importance to the novel's ability to assimilate and appropriate, commenting on how the novel may seem inutile: "it might seem as if the novel . . . has no approach of its own, and therefore requires the help of other genres to re-process reality" ("Discourse" 321). It is under the sign of the novel, therefore, that seemingly disparate genres are unified: "the novel," says Bakhtin, "has the appearance of being merely a secondary syncretic unification of other seemingly primary verbal genres" (Discourse 321).

Once the diverse genres are accommodated by the novel, they "bring into it their own languages," thereby putting into question the novel's "linguistic unity" and underscoring "its speech diversity in fresh ways" ("Discourse" 321). Like the novel, the almanac, by way of its propensity to assimilate materials, becomes a "secondary syncretic" form that synthesises other genres.

A major implication of heteroglossia in a genre is that various elements become "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way." This refraction "constitutes a special type of double-voiced discourse." Bakhtin says that in such a discourse, there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions . . . [that] are dialogically interrelated" ("Discourse" 324). Bakhtin provides examples of double-voiced discourse: "comic, ironic, parodic discourse, the refracting discourse of the narrator, refracting discourse in the language of the character and finally the discourse of a whole incorporated genre." The prospect of dialogue, says Bakhtin, is "embedded in them, one as yet unfolded, a concentrated dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages" ("Discourse" 324-325). One implication, therefore, is that of an irreconcilable ambivalence with which prose discourse is burdened. While the almanac may bring together varied elements under its wing, Bakhtin suggests that their inclusion results in nothing less than a refraction of the author's intention. For instance, while Joaquin maintains that his almanac was intended to instruct and amuse the reader (*Almanac* viii), the presence of elements as diverse as horoscopes, essays, recipes, and calendars refracts his original intention: this amusement has to be seen as bound up with, as I demonstrate in the second chapter, discrepant ways in which history is represented. Joaquin's calendar, for example, points out the ways in which nation and religion are bound up with each other: one is made aware of the national and religious constitution of Joaquin's calendrical time.

However, it would be limiting to view the almanac—interesting as that project may be—simply in intrinsically heteroglossic terms, attending exclusively to its multi-voicedness, refractions, ironies, and stratifications as if the genre were an isolated echo chamber of facts, dates, and essays. Bakhtin points out that the novel's heteroglossia "sinks its roots deep into a fundamental socio-linguistic speech diversity and multi-languagedness" ("Discourse" 325). In other words, the genre—as well as all its contradictory voices and sub-genres incorporated within—is "submerged in *social* heteroglossia" [emphasis in original] and must be seen within that larger frame of multiple audiences and discourses within the context ("Discourse" 325). Furthermore, Bakhtin maintains that the "opposition[al]" discourses within the genre are mere "surface upheavals of the untamed elements in social heteroglossia, surface manifestations of those elements that play on such individual oppositions, make them contradictory, saturate their consciousness . . . with a more fundamental speech diversity" ("Discourse" 325-326). Bakhtin points out that there is a traversal between the heteroglossia within the genre and the heteroglossia of the social polity in which the genre participates. What is notable is that Bakhtin considers that the discourses within the genre are "surface manifestations": metonymic, as it were, of larger social tensions. Furthermore, the traversal between text and context is reciprocal. For what Bakhtin also points out is that the "untamed elements of social heteroglossia" penetrate the articulation and structure of "individual" discourses within the almanac. What social heteroglossia does, therefore, is to saturate the genre with contradiction: seen in this light, discursive stratifications are evident outside of, as much as within, the almanac ("Discourse" 326).

One of Bakhtin's shortcomings is that he does not discuss the aspect of nation within the broad rubric of heteroglossia. Brennan's "The National Longing for Form" does precisely that: he considers the similarity of nation and novel in terms of heteroglossia. For Brennan, not only does the novel's rise as a genre run parallel to the ascent of nationalism, the two



categories also resonate in terms of structure: the novel "objectif[ies] the 'one yet many' of national life" and can be comparable, structurally, to the nation, which he considers as a "clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles" (49). Brennan, thus, offers a way to compare nation and novel by way of openness of both categories to heteroglossia.

Brennan's essay takes some of its theoretical cues from Bakhtin. The novel, according to Brennan, is a site where "previously foreign languages met each other on the same terrain." This encounter resulted in an "unsettled mixture of ideas and styles, themselves representing previously distinct peoples now forced to create the rationale for a common life" (50). Bakhtin himself speculates on the "irreversibl[e]" intermingling of languages, claiming that "the world becomes polyglot, once and for all" ("Epic" 12). Not only that, the "peaceful co-existence" that characterised the relationship between "territorial dialects, social and professional dialects and jargons, literary languages, generic languages within literary languages" is "no more" ("Epic" 12) and what has taken its place is the unsettled mixture. What is vital in Brennan's study is the notion that the novel, like the nation, is elastic enough to admit diverse material, and at the same time durable enough to withstand the "continual chaotic splintering" implied by the diversity and amount of the materials. The novel, says Brennan, is an "objectifi[cation] [of] the nation's *composite* nature" [emphasis in original] (51). The idea of compositeness, of a variety of materials that comprise both text and national polity, may be linked profitably with Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia.

Like Brennan, Anderson considers the vexed yet generative intersection between literary form and nation formation. What Anderson contributes, furthermore, is a temporal proposition: the notion of simultaneity. Taking his theoretical cues from Benjamin, Anderson points out that national time is not akin to Messianic time, where past, present and future become concentrated on one point. Rather, he proposes that by way of "temporal coincidence," entities which comprise the nation "mov[e] calendrically through

homogeneous, empty time"—the time of clock and calendar (*Imagined* 24). Anderson suggests that the temporal linguistic marker for national life is the word "meanwhile": while certain people do something, others, unknown to them, do something else. It is this "steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity" on a daily basis that typifies the nation's temporality (*Imagined* 26). The idea of coincidence and simultaneity is best seen in novels and newspapers, forms which are emblematic of "meanwhile." Furthermore, it is not just temporal linkages within forms which interest Anderson; he is also keen to point out the relationship between genre and market (*Imagined* 33), and considers this mode of print-capitalism—as I had pointed out in the previous section—as instrumental in the emergence of nationalism.

Bhabha is also preoccupied with time and the nation. However, unlike the ideas of simultaneity and coincidence which mark Anderson's thinking about nationalism, Bhabha considers the "double and split time of national representation" (295). Bhabha glosses Freud's idea of "surmounting" (from "The Uncanny") and relates this to nationhood: he proposes that "psychic ambivalence or intellectual uncertainty" results in the appearance of "the archaic . . . in the midst or margins of modernity" (295). Hence Bhabha—as distinguished from Anderson's notion of the temporal simultaneity of national time—opens up the possibility of not just calendrical coincidence, but also of the intermingling of two (or perhaps more) levels of temporality: the archaic juxtaposed with the modern, the "continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical" in conflict with "the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative" (295). Moreover, Bhabha's notion of the juxtapositions of archaic and modern elements connects with Bakhtin's view of a genre's history: that traces of the old are inseparable from its new features, and thus make the genre open to renewal.

Benjamin's views on historiography, in which a fragmentary aesthetic drawn from Surrealism is linked to a Marxist politics, may also provide a useful approach to Joaquin's

almanac. In *The Arcades Project*—which, because Benjamin left unfinished, resembles an assemblage of diverse material—he points out the tension between "the Marxist understanding of history" and the "perceptibility of history." He speculates on the prospect of combining the "heightened graphicness" of presentation with the move towards the "realization of the Marxist method" of historical materialism. One solution Benjamin considers is the adoption of "the principle of montage into history" (*Arcades* 461). By using the "smallest and most precisely cut components," Benjamin aspires to "assemble large-scale constructions." What this manner of presentation aims to do is akin to metonymy: the revelation of "the crystal of the total event" by way of "analysis of the small individual moment." It is by this kind of presentation—the montage (a term affiliated with cinema), the assemblage (a term related to visual art), the juxtaposition (a term associated with literature)—that Benjamin proposes to "grasp the construction of history as such" (*Arcades* 461).

Montage is a method Joaquin uses in his almanac. For instance, in the March chapter, Joaquin puts together essays on varied topics: the development of the Philippine educational system, the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan, Emilio Aguinaldo's capture by the Americans, the history of the San Lazaro Hospital. All of these events are located in various points of Philippine history: Magellan, for instance, arrived in 1521; Aguinaldo was captured in 1901. What links the essays together is the idea of calendrical coincidence: all the aforementioned details are associated with March, and hence appear in that chapter. What Joaquin does, therefore, is to gather discrete elements—distillates from Philippine history, culture, society, and politics—then compose and constellate them in a manner akin to assemblage. Furthermore, the principle that informs Joaquin's assemblage is that of coincidence. However, Joaquin's montage structure is not akin to Anderson's coincidence of characters performing actions simultaneously, a move more related to representing narratives rather than

organising historical events. Rather, in Joaquin's aesthetic, calendrical coincidence assembles "precisely cut components" not through causality, but by synchronicity: Joaquin incorporates topically incongruous and historically discontinuous material because they fall on the same month. By so doing, the montage method, along with the heteroglossic effect of incorporating genres like the calendar, light verse, recipe, and horoscope, opens up the prospect of a new way—attentive to discontinuous and non-linear materials—of writing and interpreting the nation.

Writing about a country that seems perpetually succumbing to the centrifugal forces of history, Joaquin—using an old genre—offers a new, though not unproblematic, way of representing contextual instability while at the same time assuming textual centripetality. In the *Almanac*, refractions of temporal splits and gaps created by calendrical coincidence and the mingling of multiple genres are confronted precisely with a two-faced image of time, one oriented to the past, another oriented to the future: a calendar—which Benjamin likens to a "monument of historical consciousness" ("Concept" 395)—of saints and events. It is in this space created by tensions and confrontations—interestingly enough, a space made up of fragments of time—that Joaquin locates the Filipino nation.

In this chapter, I have argued that the almanac is a heteroglossic text comprised of elements as diverse as—depending on the compiler, location, and historical milieu—calendars, chronologies, essays both literary and polemical, light verse, prognostications, among others. Furthermore, the diversity of genres which the almanac can accommodate is in dynamic relation to the social heteroglossia of the context in which it is embedded: national, historical, and cultural discourses which bear upon the almanac and, conversely, to which the almanac responds. These aspects of formal heteroglossia—and the stratification of discourses outside the almanac—I have demonstrated using various studies of the almanac's history and its involvement in diverse contexts.

I have also argued that one way to view Joaquin's *Almanac* is through a constellation of theoretical dispositions: Bakhtin's heteroglossia; concepts of nationalism by Brennan, Anderson and Bhabha, with a particular emphasis on the link between literary form and the time of the nation; and Benjamin's montage approach in dealing with historical material. What yokes these seemingly disparate theoretical persuasions is their insistence on the continuum between form and context. For Bakhtin, textual heteroglossia is imbricated to social heteroglossia. For Brennan, Bhabha and Anderson, concerns such as discrepant national temporalities and conflicting social discourses are discerned in literary forms such as the novel. For Benjamin, a fragmentary expression of history is a way in which a linear representation of history may be critiqued: a history in the form of juxtaposition and montage offers new ways of arranging historical material and opening up the possibility of liberating oneself from strictures of linear time: a constraint that may manifest itself aesthetically, but—seen in the light of developmentalist notions of historical representation—has political consequences.

By reviewing pertinent literature and arguing for the aptness of the theoretical approaches for my project, I have cleared a space for an interpretation of Joaquin's *Almanac*, to which I turn in the following chapter.

## Chapter 2: A Portrait of the *Almanac* as Historiography

The first chapter considered the elements of the almanac genre and argued how the compiler's engagement with his specific historical context accounted for variations in the entries and the subgenres incorporated. The chapter also looked at the theoretical basis on which the analysis of the *Almanac for Manileños* would stand. The second chapter turns from that background material and proceeds to analyse the *Almanac* in the light of heteroglossia and fragmentary historiography.

The plan of the second chapter is as follows: first, I argue that throughout his career, Nick Joaquin engaged with—and had been critical of—prevailing ideas in his milieu: for example, he deplored fixed nativist and triumphalist interpretations of Philippine history and called for the recovery of Spanish aspects of Philippine history during a time when American influence in the country was ascendant. Although this criticism was manifested, on occasion, in direct political action, it was through his writing that Joaquin engaged with power: his temporally-disruptive and modernist-inflected aesthetics, combined with a knowledge of—and sensitivity towards—Philippine national history, were the key qualities of an oeuvre which posed numerous questions as regards national identity, especially in relation to issues of history and culture.

Second, I turn to the ways in which this handling of form and sensitivity to history are demonstrated in the *Almanac*. I argue that the *Almanac* is characterised by a sense of cohesion *and* dismantlement as regards its structure: on the one hand, the presence of a wide range of genres and historically discrepant material accounts for its diversity and centrifugality. On the other hand, the materials are linked by way of temporal association and calendrical correspondences: this accounts for the text's cohesion and centripetality.

Third, I claim that the calendars in the *Almanac* are composed by way of correspondence and compression of national and religious categories and are, moreover, characterised by past and future temporal orientations. These discrepancies—the national vis-à-vis the religious, the future juxtaposed with the past—account for the double-sided characteristic of the calendars. Fourth, I argue that the essays in the *Almanac* are structured by way of montage: this method results, on the one hand, in a sense of temporal discontinuity. On the other hand, using montage enables Joaquin to represent conjunctions and resemblances. This double-sided strategy occasioned by montage—conjunction and fragmentation—has a corresponding political dimension: incipient possibilities in historical situations may be recognised and actualised by readers.

Finally, I argue that such methods of compression and montage critique linear and developmentalist ways in which history is conventionally depicted. By privileging innovative aesthetic strategies, Joaquin's *Almanac* offers new possibilities in conceiving of and representing the nation.

### **Momentary Interruptions, Historicising Uncertainties: Critical Receptions of Nick Joaquin**

In her review of Joaquin's essay collection *Culture and History*, the scholar Soledad Reyes points out the amalgam of characteristics that define his work. For Reyes, Joaquin's essays "combined the creativity of a fictionist / poet and the resourcefulness of a social scientist" (121). Above and beyond the fusion of creativity and resourcefulness, what is telling about Reyes's estimation of Joaquin is her situating his work in the interstices of writing and social science. Furthermore, it is precisely Joaquin's occupation of intermediary

spaces that provoked a number of responses throughout his career and offered "challenge[s] [to] certain canonized views of Philippine history" (121).

Reyes's remarks are emblematic of two points. First, they underscore Joaquin's involvement in various fields; apart from fictionist, poet and historian, as Reyes highlights, Joaquin was also a journalist, editor, and film reviewer. Secondly, Reyes calls attention to Joaquin's often provocative remarks, where he takes to task what he considers as "dogmatic fixed picture[s] of pre-Hispanic Philippines" (*Conversations* 75) and other aspects of Philippine literature, politics, culture and society.

In this section, I place Joaquin's work in a number of interrelated contexts. First, I claim, like Resil Mojares, that Joaquin's texts and statements are often contrarian responses to prevailing and popular ideas to his milieu. It is therefore crucial not to simply interpret Joaquin's material, but to embed them in their historical specificity and discern the ways in which Joaquin was in dialogue with his milieu. I provide three examples from various periods in 20th century Philippine history—the American Commonwealth period, the Japanese Occupation during the Second World War, and the Martial Law period in the 1970s—and examine how Joaquin responded to these situations.

Second, I place the *Almanac* within Joaquin's oeuvre and claim that his engagement with the milieu takes on a number of forms: he is a protean author who has written novels, plays, poetry, short fiction, children's stories, biographies and journalism. The almanac is an example of yet another genre which Joaquin explored. Third, I outline the key characteristics of Joaquin's historiography. For Joaquin, one aim of writing about history is to demonstrate the ways in which Filipinos engaged with various tools and technologies introduced by Spanish and American colonisers. In the process of engaging with these tools, Filipinos—throughout the history of colonisation—forged their identity and galvanised the nation.



Furthermore, Joaquin's historical writing is bound to a sense of place: Manila is the focus of his meditations on history. In Joaquin's view, history is characterised by cyclicity and return: aspects which were suppressed by colonisers come back when conditions for their return are made possible. In other words, Joaquin's approach to writing about history—fragmentary, cyclical, interruptive—is bound up with his modernist aesthetics, which is related to the final aim of this section. Finally, I outline Joaquin's views of—and critical responses to—the handling of form. I argue that Joaquin's aesthetics is characterised by various ways of manipulating time—rearrangements, intrusions, convergences, and simultaneities—and that the central concern of his historical writings is the problem of—and the process of forging—Filipino identity.

Nick Joaquin (1917-2004) was a National Artist for Literature in the Philippines (1976) and a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award (Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts, 1996), considered as "the highest honor for a writer in Asia" ("Biography"). He wrote in genres as diverse as poetry, fiction, reportage, drama, history, criticism, children's stories, biography, and the almanac. He also served as editor-in-chief of the *Philippines Free Press*, *Asia-Philippines Leader*, and the *Philippine Graphic*. According to the scholar Resil Mojares, Joaquin "lived through eight decades of Philippine history and witnessed the slow, uneven, and often violent transformation of the nation" ("Biography"): the American Commonwealth period, the Japanese occupation, the period of independence starting in 1946, the Martial Law period, and the EDSA Revolution.

For Mojares, Joaquin's chief preoccupation throughout his works is the problem of Filipino identity. Moreover, in Mojares's view, the positions Joaquin takes are marked by a "refusal of easy orthodoxies": to understand Joaquin's position on the various aspects of Filipino identity, one must situate them within the discourse of the period. For example, during their occupation of the Philippines during the Second World War, the Japanese

advocated a "return . . . to 'Asian' and 'Malayan' roots" ("Biography"). Joaquin, in his 1943 essay "La Naval de Manila," responded by proposing that Filipinos should consider a "fresher appraisal" of Spanish heritage: for him, despite the insistence of the occupying Japanese on the orientation to Asia, Filipinos should nevertheless reassess the "wealth of [the] 'usable past' of symbols that have grown through and through the soil and marrow of [the] people" ("La Naval" 28). For Joaquin, just because the dominant power had a standpoint that privileged Asia did not mean that nearly 400 years of heritage that emerged and was accumulated during the Spanish period should be easily discarded.

Another example would be the Commonwealth years of the 1930s, the period Joaquin was starting out as a writer. According to Joaquin, during that time, "many Filipinos . . . were brought up with so exclusive an admiration for American culture that anything not of that culture was bound to look backward or unimportant" ("The Past" 15). Any writer who worked outside the "American frame of reference"—a "modern progressive democratic liberal" standpoint—was considered, as Joaquin had been, "unhealthy and reactionary" ("The Past" 15-16). Joaquin says that during the 1930s, his critics had banished him to "a dark reactionary hinterland—a horrid healthy dead-end full of *santos* and processions and superstitious fiestas and *ilustrados* decaying among old furniture" ("The Past" 15). For Mojares, Joaquin's decision to write about the Spanish past was in response to an "intellectual establishment that, infatuated with America, wanted to wean itself from the past much too quickly" ("Biography"). Joaquin observed that the modernity that was advocated during the American period was at the expense of the Spanish heritage: for Joaquin, the contemporaneity introduced during the American period should not obscure the historical element accrued during three centuries of the Spanish period.

The *Almanac* was published in 1979, three years after Joaquin received the award for National Artist for Literature in 1976 and two years before the formal cessation of Martial

Law in 1981. For social scientists Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, the Martial Law period, which began in 1972 and was lifted in 1981 was a demonstration of "the greatest dominance of state over society the Philippines has seen" (205). Their analysis underscores a number of crucial factors. First was the "disappear[ance] from the public arena"—due to imprisonment, exile, or joining the underground movement—of a wide range of the anti-Marcos cohort: "students, academics, journalists, businessmen, and labor and peasant organizers." Second, the key characteristic of Martial Law was the forging of a "New Society"; by "arrogating legislative power to himself," Marcos put himself in a "position to craft a strong state with two powerful centralizing agencies—a military empowered during his first term and technocrats who shared his idea of national development" (207). The weakening of the opposition and the strengthening of the military and the bureaucracy were crucial to Marcos's prolonged grasp of power.

For Mojares, Marcos's project to forge a "strong state" was expressed in the "intellectual field . . . in many intersecting ways: the glorification of *barangay* [grassroots] democracy; the promotion of Tagalog as the national language and the downgrading of English writing; the 'Filipinization' of scholarly disciplines; . . . and the state-sponsored *Tadhana* [destiny] project started in 1975, in which a group of Filipino historians wrote a 'new history' of the Philippines under the name of Ferdinand Marcos" ("Biography"). The combination of nationalism and nativism was an "attempt to clothe with legitimacy Marcos's 'experiment' in Philippine-style democracy (and authoritarianism) and blunt both the insurgent opposition to his rule and Western criticism of human-rights violations" ("Biography"). During this period, Joaquin "wrote articles attacking nativism and the glorification of the indigenous and the ethnic" ("Biography"). Instead of supporting the "idea of a 'pure' native culture," Joaquin proposed that the Filipino was a "'work in progress' whose

national identity is the dynamic product of various cultural influences in his history"

("Biography"): the interaction between Spanish, American, Chinese and indigenous elements.

Joaquin, for example, locates the Filipino "golden myth" in the time prior to the arrival of the Spanish in 1521: the "colonial ordeal," he says, seems to have brought about "our indolence, our improvidence, our feelings of inferiority, [and] our addiction to graft." It follows, carrying on with the false inference derived from the myth, that "pre-Hispanic Filipinos were industrious, provident, high-spirited and scrupulous" ("Highlands" 77). This, for Joaquin, is illusory and leads to a futile search for lost origins. Rather than trace a path back to pristine beginnings, Joaquin proposes that Filipinos should see that the entry of the Spanish—their introduction of "the entire constellation of tools"—had a hand in "revolution[ising] our culture . . . [and] must be held responsible for the two most notable features of our new identity: namely, a sense of history, and a sense of community" ("Culture as History" 16).

Joaquin's engagement with dominant discourses and popular ideas primarily takes the form of the written word, although there were occasions when he participated in strikes and demonstrations. Mojares narrates an incident in 1982 when an oppositionist newspaper, *We Forum*, published a series of articles on Marcos's fake war medals. The exposé led to government closure of the publication and to the "arrest and detention of its publisher and editors." The opposition took action, and on one occasion, Joaquin "put himself at the forefront of a public demonstration" ("Biography"). San Juan also mentions a period in 1970 when Joaquin played a "militant if short-lived role as president of the [Philippines] Free Press Labor Union"; San Juan contrasts Joaquin with other "opportunist pseudo-intellectuals . . . comfortably occupying bureaucratic sinecures" and argues that Joaquin is an "exceptional artist of integrity, Catholic compassion, and principle," a Filipino writer comparable to "Cervantes and Dostoevsky—an artist of global contradictions coeval with the times in which

he lived" (*Toward* xiv). And yet for Mojares, militant action and the "street appearance [are] not characteristic of [Joaquin]"; it is "in the field of writing that he engage[s] power" ("Biography").

Moreover, the field of writing of which Joaquin is part is wide and eclectic. His most famous play, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, was written "sometime around 1950," published in *Weekly Women's Magazine*, subsequently included in *Prose and Poems* (1952), was first staged in 1955, and was adapted into a movie by Filipino filmmaker Lamberto V. Avellana in 1965 ("Biography"). *Portrait* centres on the conflict generated by a painting by Don Lorenzo Marasigan, a revolutionary during the Spanish period who has now retreated into his house in Intramuros following the encroachment of the new American order in the Philippines. He bequeaths his painting to his two daughters, Paula and Candida, who are then approached by various parties who, upon seeing the work's artistic value, offer substantial amounts for its purchase: Don Perico, for instance, represents the interests of the Philippine government, while Tony, on the other hand, represents an American buyer. Paula and Candida are caught in a bind: on the one hand, the painting is a legacy from their father; on the other hand, the money they stand to gain from the purchase will alleviate their poverty. Much of the play's power rests on the ability of the painting to evoke conflicting interpretations.

In the novel *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961), Joaquin depicts two generations of Filipinos in Hong Kong: Dr. Monson, who stands for the older generation, is—like Lorenzo Marasigan—a revolutionary who fought the Spaniards but could not come to terms with the American present. He remains stuck in the Spanish past while keeping himself disconnected from his homeland (he rarely visits the Philippines) and the present. His children and their friends, however, are unmoored from the past and are having difficulty going through the present. The novel, therefore, may be read as emblematic of the gaps and

discrepancies in national time: the older generation unable to move away from the revolutionary past and come to terms with the present, the younger generation disconnected from the past and moving vacuously through the present.

Joaquin's journalism, written during his tenure as editor of *Philippines Free Press*, is collected in *Gloria Diaz and Other Delineations* (1977), *Amalia Fuentes and Other Etchings* (1977), *Joseph Estrada and Other Sketches* (1977), *Ronnie Poe and Other Silhouettes* (1977), *Doveglion and Other Cameos* (1977), *Nora Aunor and Other Profiles* (1977), *Manila: Sin City? and Other Chronicles* (1980), and *The Language of the Street and Other Essays* (1980). The numerous publications, for Mojares, demonstrate Joaquin's "boundless creativity and versatility" ("Biography"). For Joaquin, these journalistic pieces were specific ways to address an audience: for him, "Filipino writers have always been writing for a mass media"; Joaquin considers his readership as "not composed of intellectuals but . . . an audience that reads newspapers" (*Conversations* 69).

The *Almanac* is therefore situated in Martial Law and, more generally, within the fourth decade of Joaquin's career. It appeared during a particularly volatile and contested period in Philippine history: disputes on Filipino identity were being held within the context of state repression. In terms of Joaquin's career, the *Almanac* appeared when Joaquin was 62 years old: an author with close to four decades of work—in various genres no less: journalism, fiction, novel, short fiction, and poetry. For Mojares, Joaquin's "knowledge of the country's capital city"—as demonstrated by the plethora of detail in the *Almanac*, as well as in his book-length history *Manila, My Manila* (1999) and the edited volume on Intramuros (1988)—was unparalleled and "has not been matched by anyone" ("Biography").

I have given a general outline of Joaquin's career, and have demonstrated that his work and his statements have to be seen in the context of, and as taking part in, various discourses in various periods in 20th century Philippines: for instance, his need to recover the

Spanish past during the turn to modernisation during the American period, and, during Martial Law, his views on mixed and syncretic national identity. I have also considered Joaquin's career in the light of the multiple genres he wrote in. I now turn to two specific aspects of his writing—his sense of history and his handling of form—and demonstrate, later in the chapter, how these aspects are consistently seen in the *Almanac*.

For Joaquin, one aim of history is to look at periods where introductions of new tools—or, taking a cue from Marshall McLuhan, techniques and media—cannot help but "alter the culture [and] alter the course of the community, with vivid effects on its politics, economics and arts" ("Culture as History" 3). Joaquin the historian sees as his focus of study the people's engagement—over time—with a wide array of technologies: spiritual (Christianity), culinary (cooking styles based on *sautéing*), temporal (clock and calendrical time), architectural (masonry), agricultural (new crops), among others.

As historian, Joaquin—in his essays collected in *Culture and History*—considers the introduction of the following things as the "greatest events in Philippine history": the wheel; the plow; roads and bridges; new crops; new livestock; the factory; the alphabet; the clock and calendar; the map; painting and architecture; and *guisado* [*sautéing*] ("Culture and History" 405-406). Joaquin considers the entry of these new technologies as "epochal"; it is during the first two centuries of Spanish colonisation that Filipinos began to engage with these tools. Joaquin, furthermore, argues that the encounter with technology did not leave the Filipinos unchanged: "each new tool, each new idea," he says, "has been a challenge demanding a response" ("Culture and History" 405).

Joaquin also points out that this engagement with technology is inseparable from processes of nation formation and the articulation of national identity. Joaquin considers the period of Spanish colonisation as the "process through which our nation achieved that integrity of being when history and culture, form and substance, became a whole from which

none of its components can be removed because the least factor is essential to the question" ("History as Culture" 212). Thus, Filipinos' engagement with Spanish-introduced technology is the workshop in which nationhood is shaped. For Joaquin, even if cultural processes may not be as pronounced as uprisings, they are equally important: culture, according to him, is "the way of life being impressed on a community by its technics" ("Culture as History" 3). Hence, Joaquin attends not just to the grand events of history, but also quotidian elements that may seem less important but, upon closer inspection, are crucial to nation formation.

Joaquin says that "our history as Filipinos should place emphasis on architect and engineer and their political effects—the effects that eventually intensified into the key sequence of events now glorified in our flag." Joaquin proposes a kind of history that views "the era of colonization . . . as a period of technical and economic experiments" ("History as Culture" 229) that for all their shortcomings, still resulted in the national form the Philippines has today.

Hence, in his writings about history, Joaquin is concerned with the ways in which Filipinos forged and articulated a national identity. For Joaquin, this process is bound up with the Filipinos' engagement with various technologies introduced by the coloniser. Hence, unlike other historians, whose accounts of nation formation are attached to ideas of social, economic and political liberation, and are typically written in large scale narratives—ideas in which Joaquin himself is nevertheless invested—Joaquin's version of history is accented with the cultural and with the quotidian. Furthermore, by characterising these engagements as experimental, Joaquin acknowledges their open-ended and tentative nature. This open-endedness is pointed out by historian Vicente Rafael, who draws comparisons between his and Joaquin's projects: accompanying the attempt to come to terms with Philippine history is a "sense of vertigo" that is both "epistemological and comparative" (18).



Another essay which evinces Joaquin's view of history is "Sa Loob Ng Maynila" ("Inside Manila"). "Sa Loob ng Maynila" demonstrates how Joaquin's thinking about history is inseparable from his views of place, tradition (the idea of custom and ceremony which he takes from Yeats), and what he calls a "coherent community." For Joaquin, Intramuros before the Second World War was the location of seven major churches and of numerous festivals throughout the year in which these churches were the sites. For Joaquin, the stable sense of community, tradition, time and place were inseparable from each other. In Joaquin's historicising, the sense of community dissolved along with the decline of Intramuros.

Joaquin's engagement with history is also seen in "The Past Always Returns." In this essay, Joaquin reflects on his experience of coming of age as a writer in the American period; his experience illustrates his view of a cyclical, ever-returning past. When he was starting out as a writer, the Americans considered the Spanish aspect of Philippine history as obsolete, like "old furniture." However, as Joaquin claims, the past rejected during the American period was bound to come back. The artist, for Joaquin, has a crucial role in enabling this return: using an analogy to Picasso—"nobody could see a Picasso until Picasso trained the eyes of the audience to see a Picasso" ("The Past" 16)—Joaquin says that the artist, through his work, can make the audience predisposed to see value in that which the present context sees as worthless. In other words, Joaquin asserts that the artist has enough agency—both aesthetic and political—to occasion a shift in the audience's ways of seeing.

Joaquin's work may be profitably situated within the context of historian Bernardita Churchill's survey of current developments in historical writing in the Philippines. For Churchill, in her essay on trends, topics, and approaches in recent Philippine historiography, "within the last three decades [there] has been the shift from politico-diplomatic history to the current socio-economic-cultural trend which has necessitated the use of techniques and theories of related social science disciplines . . . and the humanities." These theoretical and

methodological tools enable historians to "analyze and understand forces behind the facts, the utilization of new sources . . . and the re-examination of old sources in new ways" (15).

Moreover, for Churchill, historians are expanding the scope of their studies too; they now look at "the nature of Philippine institutions and culture which have changed and/or persisted throughout the long period of intensive colonial influence and the impact of modernizing factors" (16).

Joaquin's view of history contrasts with works from historians of a more nationalist persuasion: for instance, Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino. For these historians, the economic liberation of the labouring class was equivalent to national liberation, and that the task of history is to trace the struggle of the working class—and, therefore, the nation—toward emancipation. In Constantino's view, for example, "a study of history which seeks to clarify the genesis and development of our peculiar consciousness can be a powerful factor in effecting our independence, both economic and intellectual" (393). This kind of history which portrays the emergence of Filipino consciousness, however, focuses on grand events that typically demonstrate evidence of national resistance and liberation: evidence of clear engagement with colonial forces.

For Joaquin, a "new approach to Philippine history is needed," but not exclusively from the vantage point of the working class—the acknowledged engine of history from Constantino's Marxist perspective—but from "the viewpoint of town and technics." This disposition proposes that the "era of [Spanish] colonization" was a "period of technical and economic experiments"; of "enterprises" and "pioneering adventure[s]" that were "sometimes bad in immediate effect and sometimes good in the long run" ("History as Culture" 229). Joaquin, hence, underscores the tentativeness and open-endedness of social processes (he acknowledges their "experimental" nature); his views can be counterpointed, as I do later, to the more decidedly deterministic views held by critics such as Conrado de Quiros.

Joaquin's historicising has also been critiqued by San Juan. For San Juan, while Joaquin reveals new insights by way of his recourse to technology, his histories still "conceal . . . the infrastructure of economic processes" (*Subversions* 201). In other words, even though the approach may be unique, for San Juan, Joaquin nevertheless fails to analyse such technological engagements in the light of exploitative and colonial material conditions where such interaction was taking place. Hence, in San Juan's view, all is surface: in *A Question of Heroes*, for instance, the infighting between national heroes is, for San Juan, simplistic "conspiratorial maneuverings of villains and heroes" and "mere succession without development." By failing to address the "concrete ground" on which history unfolds, Joaquin's writing is just a "transcri[ption] . . . [of] the surface dance of passions, reflexes, [and] wills" (*Subversions* 201). As a result, Joaquin's historical writing is characterised by frozenness and stasis: an "architectonic frieze" and a "baroque funeral pageant adorned with all the mesmerizing finery of a Renaissance triumphal procession" (*Subversions* 201). For San Juan, Joaquin's failure to fully lay bare the oppressive economic structures that pervade historical situations results in a kind of writing that is typified by a set of actions that remain on the surface: movement without dynamism, dispute without struggle. However, as I demonstrate later on, Joaquin's modernist aesthetic enables him to articulate a version of Philippine history which is not strictly beholden to economic determinism.

The scholar and journalist Conrado de Quiros offers two critiques of Joaquin's views. First, de Quiros objects to Joaquin's tendency to "abstract tools from [their mode of] production, depriving them of their natural function, and investing them with an independent and primary existence" (40). For de Quiros, Joaquin's way of thinking about history is oriented in reverse. Instead of viewing tools and technology as seemingly influential to forging of identity and culture (which is de Quiros's view of Joaquin's historicising), de Quiros claims that, following a materialist view of historical processes—and contra

Joaquin—the "*practice* [emphasis in original] of production or a particular economic process developed particular tools" should be the aspects emphasised. What de Quiros ultimately privileges is a kind of historical analysis that views "technology in general" as inseparable from the "economic system it represents and the science that accompanies it" (41).

De Quiros's second objection is in the seeming lack of systematisation in Joaquin's "approach to history." De Quiros takes Joaquin to task for having no "systematic theory of society" to inform his historical writing. De Quiros's interpretation of Joaquin is that "men come together because they share in the *knowledge* [emphasis in original] of a particular ensemble of tools; they form what we might describe as a 'tool cult.'" De Quiros distinguishes historical writing informed by materialism from Joaquin's kind of historicising: in the former, there is a semblance of social "organization"; for the latter, there is social "aggrupation" [sic]. This means that the kind of historicising that takes its theoretical bearings from materialism would be sensitive to the "nature of the relations [between agents of society] (cooperative? exploitative? What manner of cooperation? What manner of exploitation?)" (43). Joaquin, for de Quiros, omits this aspect from his work.

For de Quiros, Joaquin frames history in terms of "technology transfer," and consequently ignores relations of exploitation, failing to consider "the pressures that motivated Spain to colonize the Philippines, the specific manner of exploitation it perpetrated; and the nature of the Philippines society that emerged" (44). In de Quiros's view, Joaquin's historiography lacks solid grounding in Marxist methods and theories. Joaquin's notion of history as engagement with foreign technologies is rightly taken to task by de Quiros for being abstracted from the oppressive and demeaning social conditions in which such encounters took place.

Nevertheless, Joaquin himself says that he is aware of the dynamism inherent in historical processes. For example, Joaquin characterises a dynamic culture as being able "to

react to any influence that is strong enough . . . so that nothing can be added to it [Filipino culture] that does not affect or change it entirely" ("History as Culture" 227). Joaquin, therefore, acknowledges the responsiveness of Filipinos with regard to external influences: "the lively responses to that newness with which our pristine culture transformed itself" ("Expression" 334). Joaquin is not interested in technology for its own sake, he is keen to raise questions about identity—about "whether by becoming something more it [Filipino culture] became something else"—informed by a desire to "make the past usable to the challenging present" ("Expression" 334).

For anthropologist Fernando Zialcita, Joaquin's dynamism means that his [Joaquin's] statements have to be seen in the light of their historical contexts and his "theory of history" (20). Otherwise, Joaquin's statements run the risk of being viewed as "at best antiquarian, at worst reactionary" (20). According to Zialcita, Joaquin has been taken to task for his seemingly ambivalent statements: for "damn[ing] [and] prais[ing] the friar," for "ingratiating himself with friar-lover and friar-hater alike" (20). For Zialcita, Joaquin's statements, such as the ones about the role of the friars in the Philippines, have to be seen in the light of their historical circumstances. In the 16th century, for example, the concept of the Filipino "nation" was non-existent: when the Spaniards arrived in 1521, what they saw were "small, isolated pockets of impermanent settlements" (22). A typical *barangay* [the basic social unit] "consisted of eight to ten houses, that is of 30 to 40 people, related to each other through blood, marriage, and residence" (23). There was hardly any "specialization in a craft like carpentry, sculpture, masonry" and the like (23). There was an "unending cycle of warfare" as "chieftains raided weaker villages because . . . a large servile labor force gave both prestige and wealth" (23). Moreover, the "technological infrastructure . . . could not generate a surplus sufficient to maintain fulltime non-agricultural specialists and a ruling class" (23). There were also no "symbols[,] no sacred place, cultic leader or deity" in which the various

ethnic groups "could find a common identity" (23). In other words, in terms of state formation, "no territorial state could exist for there was no unifying symbol system propagated by an administrative elite supported by a surplus-generating technology" (23). This is the historical context, argues Zialcita, in which Joaquin offers praise to the friars who came to the country starting from the 16th century. Zialcita says that, in this circumstance, Joaquin valued the friars who "replaced the wilderness with farmland . . . brought in the plow, the carabao as draft animal, the wheel, the road, and a cornucopia of plants we now take for granted" (24). Apart from this introduction of new technologies, the friar "created the barrio, the town, the province by bringing, under the bell, communities that were scattered and changed residence after a few years of kaingin [burning of trees and shrubs to enable land to be cultivated] in one place" (24). By galvanising the scattered people under one religion, the friars were instrumental in "fus[ing] hitherto warring or isolated peoples into one" (24). Such a yoking together was indicative of the role of the friars in providing the "foundations for the territorial state of the Philippines" (24).

By contrast, according to Zialcita, for Joaquin, the importance of the friars changed in the 19th century. In the changed context of the 19th century, the friar's "mission became an Inquisition" (25). In this period in Philippine history, the agricultural innovations introduced by the friars in the 16th century had developed, and the country was "now exporting rice, sugar, and tobacco" (25). The country became "open to world trade" and "local branches of foreign business firms [were] set up" (25). The middle class became intellectual and economic beneficiaries who "thrived on this commerce" (25). However, despite the onset of progress, the friar "clung to the status ante quo" [sic] and "refused to share his broad civil powers with the rising middle class," insisting, for example, on maintaining a "catechism-centered curriculum" (25). In the light of this changing situation, Joaquin repudiates the friar class and values instead the *ilustrado* [educated] and revolutionary classes. For Zialcita,

Joaquin's seemingly shifting views of the friars is grounded on his reading of changing historical situations: "the friar's importance is thus relative, not absolute" (26). The friar "once played a significant role in a past context; but he has refused to adapt himself to a widening and changing context" (26).

In this regard, Zialcita's assessments of Joaquin's views of history recalls Benjamin's point in Convolute N of *The Arcades Project*: "[F]or every stage in the dialectical process (like every stage in the process of history itself), conditioned as it always is by every stage preceding, brings into play a fundamentally new tendency, which necessitates a fundamentally new treatment" (474). For Joaquin, according to Zialcita, discerning how "new tendencies" in new historical moments bring about "new treatment[s]" and approaches is crucial: the friar class may have been vital during the 16th century—insofar as it prepared the ground for state formation—but, during the 19th century, they failed to recognise the emergent signs of unrest among the Filipino middle and working classes.

Reyes points out that Joaquin's work "refutes the current views of history, ranging from the obviously nostalgic and romantic (the return to the precolonial past) to the more deterministic and materialist notions" (123) espoused by Agoncillo, Constantino and de Quiros. For critics like Reyes, the value of Joaquin's historiography lies neither in his theoretical and methodological innovations (he is not a social scientist) nor his nationalist ideological force (he is not a polemicist). Moreover, Joaquin offers views which do not subscribe to strictly materialist, mythical or nativist notions of history. For Reyes, Joaquin's value as a historian may be located in the aforementioned creativity and resourcefulness with which his historical writing is presented. She characterises Joaquin as a writer who "deftly uses words to argue and, as importantly, to suggest." Instead of employing the approaches and theoretical dispositions germane to social scientists, Joaquin's analyses, in Reyes's view,

take from the "resources of . . . fictional discourse"; his interpretations of history take the shape of "narratives on the process of becoming" (124).

For the historian Vicente Rafael, "Joaquin's revisionary history thus recalls what has often been forgotten. And that recollection frequently comes as a surprise: for example, the recollection of the alien origins of the guava tree used for supposedly traditional rites of circumcision, or of a revolution not only unfinished but unresolved, steeped in acts both courageous and criminal. They draw one to think of impure origins and foreign genealogies, of national selves ineluctably inhabited by foreign others" (17-18). It is precisely this ability to surprise that gives value to Joaquin's histories: this surprise is made possible not only by Joaquin's literary gifts but also by his propensity to introduce, as Rafael says, what is alien, impure, foreign and—to use a word in the Bakhtinian lexicon—heteroglossic. Such privileging of impurities and heterogeneities in Joaquin's historical writing is bound up with his aesthetics, to which I will now turn.

Joaquin's notions of history are inseparable from his aesthetics, which have received much attention as well from scholars of various persuasions. For critics like E. San Juan, Leonard Casper, Miguel Bernad and Vicente Rafael, Joaquin's aesthetics—as embodied in his fiction and drama—are typified by a preoccupation with dismantling linear and fixed notions of time. Joaquin demonstrates such dismantlements by a variety of methods: temporal simultaneities, intrusions, pluralities and, in the case of the *Almanac*, fugal structures and mixed genres.

A useful starting point in understanding Joaquin's aesthetics would be his reading of T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent." For Joaquin, one way to see this work is to view it in terms of "the rearrangement which, according to T.S. Eliot, each really new work of art forces on the established order of all previous works of art. Those previous works of art are not thereby annulled; rather do they become transfigured, because recognized from the



viewpoint of the new work of art" ("Expression" 333-334). For Joaquin, taking his cue from Eliot, rearrangement of the established order of art does not result in its annulment or abolition, but rather in its transformation. In this sense, the presence of a new work of art forces both a recovery and reassessment of past works.

Joaquin uses Eliot's example, in "The Metaphysical Poets," of John Donne's work in conjunction with his own examples from the Philippines. "Eliot himself," for Joaquin, "by being new, caused the 'rearrangement' that made the long-obsolete Donne contemporary. And the modern poet's sophisticated reading of Donne is equivalent to the modern Filipino's sophisticated adoption of the *sarimanok* or the *capiz* shell. The adoption is not, cannot be, a return to the pristine, as Donne today is not the 17th century alone, but the 17th century plus the modern sensibility" ("Expression" 334). As Joaquin indicates, a rearrangement in the order does not signify a return to pure and unadulterated conditions; rather, one should be attentive to the ways in which the recovered past responds to its new context in the present: Donne's 17th century sensibility recast in 20th century poetics, an accoutrement in traditional Filipino houses—capiz shells—repurposed for a contemporary interior.

Joaquin is cognizant of "the lively responses to that newness with which our pristine culture transformed itself. It continued; it wasn't lost; it didn't go to sleep; though it's something more as we have it now than as we had it in the beginning. The question is whether by becoming something more it became something else" ("Expression" 334). For Joaquin, via his reading of "Tradition and the Individual Talent," the production of a new work of art forces the viewer to engage not just with the present but also with past works. This double engagement is bound up with the idea of mutual transformation: a reassessment of the past and the present in the light of each other. Furthermore, for Joaquin, articulating such shifts requires the use of new forms, new ways of organising time in his works.

San Juan, for instance, notices that the "modernist impulse in Joaquin moves him to orchestrate experimental deceptions, the elliptical avant-garde style of stream-of-consciousness and plural perceptions, witty reflexive texture, T.S. Eliot's luminous symbol outside time, and fugal arrangements, with a compulsive predilection for an art of the hieroglyph, rebus and charade" (*Subversions* 196). San Juan characterises Joaquin's formal strategies in fiction as having the potential to trouble aspects of structure, character, texture, symbol, perspective and narrative. Although Joaquin does not employ a number of these strategies in the *Almanac*—it does not have, for instance, fictional characters—the tendency for non-linearity and disruptiveness is nevertheless demonstrated in the *Almanac*.

Writing about *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, the scholar Caroline Hau claims that it is the intersubjectivity of the various conflicting characters that offer the historical accents in the play. Intersubjectivity is seen when various characters offer conflicting interpretations of a painting which the audience does not see. The painting refers to a historical allusion (Aeneas and Anchises fleeing from burning Troy) and this reference is connected to questions of what constitutes the Filipino nation. Hau argues that the play is "haunted by the content of its historical allusion, in other words, by the interpretive demands of history" (107). In *Portrait*, Joaquin offers a "mode of collective understanding, a form of historical knowledge with a claim to 'truth' that is recognized, and at the same time mediated, by material conditions and an interpretive historical consciousness" (117).

The critic Leonard Casper comments that in Joaquin's fiction, "the past seems everpresent even though itself subject to change in the ongoing process of future-becoming-present." He also underscores Joaquin's propensity to "stop time through simultaneity" and to suggest timelessness "by such devices as the convergence of several generations onstage." He also points out Joaquin's use of "layered effect[s], of simultaneity superseding continuity,"

and of the use of cinematic techniques to "provide impressions of simultaneity as finite emblems of infinity" (89).

For the critic Miguel Bernad, Joaquin's notion of the past was that it was a "haunted world where the future intruded upon the past, the past dragged the future, and the past and future merged in the present." For Bernad, the intrusion of temporalities depicts a world that is "tangible and vividly real and the ghosts are thoroughly corporeal" (55).

For Rafael, Joaquin's modernist approaches and his attention to history—which are bound up with Joaquin's "thinking of the Filipino as an 'identity in progress'"—is akin to "historicizing the uncertainty of such names and namings" (i.e., Filipinos naming themselves as Filipinos during the 19th century, considered as one of the critical moments of the nascent nationalist movement). Rafael argues that Joaquin's various acts of naming and definition—a general engagement, by way of literary works, with Philippine history and culture—contributes to the "moment[ary] interrupt[ion] [of] the workings of colonial and national lobotomies" (18). As I indicated earlier, during the American period, the efforts at modernising the Philippines came at the expense and the erasure of the Spanish past.

As San Juan says, "With the notion of a fixed identity exploded and temporality pluralized, [Joaquin's] texts begin to constitute a fluid and heterogenous subjectivity or subject-position that questions phallogentric power and class oppression" (*Subversions* 196-197). For San Juan, form and politics are bound up in Joaquin's writing. Despite his misgivings about Joaquin's shortcomings—Joaquin fails to ground his analyses in material conditions—San Juan emphasises the agency inherent in Joaquin's modernist-accented works. The heterogeneity in texts like the *Almanac* interrogates not just aesthetic fixities and encrustations but also static forms of historicising and power relations.

Prior to turning to the analysis of the *Almanac*, key qualities of Joaquin's aesthetics and historiography may be summarised as follows. First, Joaquin's writings on history are

primarily concerned with the Filipinos' engagement with technologies introduced by the Spanish and American coloniser. These encounters with foreign cultures—which Joaquin considers as experimental, a risk whose results are unknown—were crucial to the continuing emergence of Filipino identity. Second, Joaquin's writings on history are concerned with the idea of place, particularly Manila. For Joaquin, at a certain period in its history, Manila was the locus of coherence: a unified community, solid traditions, consistent architecture. The decline of Manila also corresponded to its dissolution: a city whose old architecture remained unrestored and in ruin, a community in fragments. A final concern in Joaquin's writings deals with the cyclical movement of time. For Joaquin, elements which the present time considers worthless or repressed have the potential of return and restoration. What occasions this restoration is a shift in perception of these seemingly neglected things, and the artist, with his aesthetic agency, can play a vital role in this revisioning.

Joaquin's writings on history have been criticised as being unsystematic. Moreover, his writings have been taken to task by San Juan and de Quiros for their seeming lack of grounding on Marxist principles, and their seeming ignorance of—or their failure to lay bare—the exploitative economic conditions which constituted the background of his analyses and accounts. By contrast, Zialcita has pointed out that Joaquin's ambivalence and shiftiness are vital qualities of his work; Joaquin's ability to alter his views in accordance to changing historical contexts is a mark of his ability to discern distinctions between different periods in Philippine history. Furthermore, as elaborated on by Rafael, Joaquin's recollection of forgotten details—especially as they relate to foreign and impure elements introduced to Philippine history—is characterised by a sense of surprise.

Joaquin's aesthetics are modern in disposition. He takes his cue from Eliot's notion of historical rearrangement and uses it as a lens with which to view—and to write about— aspects of Philippine history. Moreover, other aspects of the modern aesthetic are discernible

in his work: decreation, ellipsis, parataxis, among others. A crucial point to consider is how critics like Casper and Bernad have drawn the link between Joaquin's modernist-influenced aesthetics and his propensity for discontinuous and disruptive temporal representations. For these critics, Joaquin's work is characterised by temporal layers, intrusions, simultaneities, cohabitations of past, present and future. Such fluid and heterogeneous temporal representations have the potential to interrogate fixed and static notions of time.

### **"Wedded in the Association": Cohesion of Discrepant Materials and Accommodation of Distinct Genres in the *Almanac***

In this section, I turn to a more specific consideration of the *Almanac*'s content and structure. I argue that the *Almanac*'s structure is characterised by centripetality and centrifugality: the diverse materials and subgenres Joaquin incorporates disrupt the sense of chronological unity, while at the same time, cohere by way of temporal associativeness.

In the August chapter of the *Almanac*, Nick Joaquin traces the relations between an object, a date, a colour, a fiesta, and a revolution. St. Bartholomew's feast, says Joaquin, falls on the 24th; that day is devoted to this patron saint of cutlery who traditionally "wears red and wields a bolo." In Malabon's main street, furthermore, fiesta attendees can find "stalls where [they] can buy all kinds of blade: balisong and kitchen knife and butcher's cleaver, as well as the long bolo known as the *sangbartolome*, the weapon of the Katipunan." Joaquin points out how "history and folk culture"—and furthermore: name of saint, name of knife, colour, date and revolutionary uprising—"are wedded in the association of August the red month and Bartholomew the red saint with the Katipunan, which also wore red and wielded a bolo" (*Almanac* 207).

"Wedded in the association": this phrase indicates Joaquin's strategy with regard to arranging the content and subgenres in his *Almanac*. In his preface, Joaquin notes the diversity of materials and forms he includes: the *Almanac* is "a calendar, a weather chart, a sanctoral, a zodiac guide, and a mini encyclopedia on the world of the Manileño" (*Almanac* viii). The *Almanac* is divided into 12 chapters—one for each month—each following the same structure. The chapter begins with a photograph of a scene typically associated with Manila: a procession, the city hall, the city's cuisine, among others. The calendar follows this visual element: Joaquin's calendar entries feature a saint and an event or personality of national importance. After the calendar, Joaquin includes a horoscope.

After the horoscope, the bulk of the chapter follows; this consists of a series of essays, which include, but are not restricted to: descriptions of Filipino wedding practices, etymology of some place names, descriptions of religious processions and rituals, and sketches of various points of—and issues within—Philippine history. As scholar and critic Doreen Fernandez observes, the *Almanac* compiles what Joaquin "knows, remembers [and] has found out about Manila" (20). For Fernandez, the *Almanac* demonstrates Joaquin's understanding of Manila's "climate and ambiance" as shaped by factors as diverse as "history, society, folk culture, need, custom, whim [and] time" (20). Fernandez's catalogue indicates Joaquin's range of interests, especially as they come to bear on Manila. Moreover, for Fernandez, even while the materials Joaquin incorporates seem disconnected—references to balisong and St. Bartholomew are in the same chapter—"there is [nevertheless] a system to the delivery of . . . information and delight, a discernible pattern" (20). For her, Joaquin demonstrates two distinct yet intertwined qualities: first, he offers a prodigious knowledge of city and country; second, he finds a suitable frame in which to situate this material and place them in relation to each other.

Similarly, San Juan considers the almanac as a form which offers the prospect of making discrepant things cohere. For him, Joaquin uses the "calendar convention [as a way] of amalgamating discordant facts and incompatible topics." In San Juan's view, the calendar—and by extension, the *Almanac*—becomes the textual site where diverse minutiae find coherence and consonance. Moreover, San Juan considers the *Almanac* as a text which endeavours to impose a "cross-referential unity on a vast encyclopedic catalogue of material through the device of astrology." Although astrology, as typified by the prognostication, does not seem to be the most crucial organising device of the *Almanac*—in Joaquin's case, it is that sense of temporal associativeness which holds materials and genres together—San Juan rightly points out the propensity of Joaquin's chosen form to render coherence to an otherwise diverse and disparate set of material. The *Almanac*, hence, is a form which can "yoke together" discrepant elements (*Subversions* 8).

However, although San Juan rightly takes into account the aspect of cohesiveness, there is still the need to consider the aspect of dismantlement. Moreover, the link between coherence and dismantlement—both simultaneously a characteristic of the *Almanac*—should also be investigated. As Bakhtin says, "every utterance participates in the 'unitary language' (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)" ("Discourse" 272). Taking my cue from Bakhtin, I consider Joaquin's *Almanac* as a text whose structural principle is located in the interstice between dissolution and cohesion, centripetality and centrifugality, discrepancy and resonance.

Consider the chapter on February. For this month, the calendar features feast days of Catholic saints such as St. Apollonia (9 February, patroness of dentists). Important dates in Philippine history—such as the burning of Intramuros by the Japanese on 8 February 1945—are also included. The horoscope, which is cast for Pisceans, speaks of their propensity for

"quick spur-of-the-moment jobs"; moreover, Joaquin cautions against Piscean "sluggish[ness] when confronted with projects that demand patience, time and deliberation" (*Almanac* 31).

After the horoscope, the *Almanac* moves on to a series of essays dealing with aspects of Philippine history, culture, myths, cuisine, among others. One essay describes how the Philippine-American war began as a skirmish on a bridge on the San Juan River. Joaquin says that on the night of 4 February, gunfire was exchanged between Filipino and American troops within the "vicinity of the bridge between Sta. Mesa and San Juan del Monte" (*Almanac* 34). After that essay, Joaquin describes Manila during the last month of the Japanese occupation during World War II, when American troops, who were part of the city's liberating forces, walked along the sidewalks and were greeted with "Hi, Joe!" and "Victory, Joe!" These greetings of celebration, though, are the happy aspect of Joaquin's account; he tells of "grimmer news"—of the southern part of Manila being destroyed by American and Japanese forces (*Almanac* 35).

Elsewhere in the February chapter, Joaquin considers Filipino pre-Hispanic courtship rituals, then describes how these practices changed during the Spanish period. Prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, Filipino men would resort to *gayuma*, a concoction of "mystic herbs and roots and outrageous substances" (*Almanac* 39). Joaquin also reports that pre-Hispanic Filipinos kissed not with the lips but by rubbing their noses. When the Spaniards arrived, the practice of *harana*—an "evening serenade under the girl's window"—became more commonplace. Another essay portrays the Manila Carnival. For Joaquin, this "two-week riot" which took place in Wallace Field (just outside Luneta) "before the start of Lent" (*Almanac* 39) was a period of gaiety. At the entrance, one would buy "a mask, a horn and a bag of confetti," and the younger ones would come dressed as a "harlequin or [in] clown costume with dunce cap" (*Almanac* 39). There were commercial exhibits, parades, nightly



balls and pageants with coronation nights. Like the details associated with August—the Revolution, the bolo, the balisong, St. Bartholomew—Joaquin culls material associated with February: the destruction of Manila during the latter part of Second World War, an evening serenade, a harlequin costume, a concoction of herbs.

Joaquin's rearrangements offer a double strategy: firstly, the almanac dislodges events from their appointed places: a kind of dismantling of orthodox linear historiography, which I discuss later in the chapter; and secondly, the dislodged materials are then assigned places using a method that is associative. For example, as regards the act of dismantling: the materials for February—the onset of the Philippine-American War, the final months of the Second World War, a description of pre-Hispanic courtship rituals, and a description of the Manila Carnival at Wallace Field—are situated in various points in the timeline of Philippine history: 1898, 1945, the pre-Hispanic period, and the American Commonwealth period, respectively. Conversely, Joaquin reconstitutes these elements and reinscribes them not in a linear fashion, but within a frame typified by temporal association: the elements are all related to February. In San Juan's terms, this method amalgamates discordance; in Fernandez's terms, it is a way to make patterns discernible.

Joaquin claims that his goals in compiling the materials in the almanac are to inform and delight (*Almanac* viii); he offers miscellanea such as facts, weather, history, culture, cuisine, geography. Consistent with Fernandez's assessment, the array of topics cannot be viewed apart from the variety of genres Joaquin incorporates: calendars, essays, recipes. Moreover, the delight to which Joaquin refers is characterised not just by the multiplicity of topics but the ways in which these materials are structured and assume myriad forms.

Joaquin, for instance, refers to the Doctor Ross almanacs, which feature optical illusions: these almanacs, he says, delighted Filipino readers—particularly children—in the 1920s. Joaquin, however, does not perform illusory visual tricks in the almanac; rather, one

source of delight is in the rearrangements, of which the aforementioned details are examples. Moreover, this method of dislodging and restructuring material is inseparable from the question of genre: in Joaquin's text, the rearrangement of content occurs within a context of recombination of smaller genres within the *Almanac* itself. Once more, Bakhtin's remarks on the novel illuminate this aspect of Joaquin's *Almanac*. For Bakhtin, the novel is a form that permits the accommodation of various genres. The novel allows for the "incorporation of various genres, both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra-artistic (everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and others)" ("Discourse" 320). Bakhtin describes the propensity of the novel to admit multiple, heterogeneous forms: "in principle," says Bakhtin, "any genre could be included in the construction of the novel, and in fact it is difficult to find any genres that have not at some point been incorporated into a novel by someone" ("Discourse" 320-321). Bakhtin makes it clear that while accommodation is one of the novel's defining characteristics, the genres assimilated by the novel do not relinquish their formal properties. Bakhtin points out that the "incorporated genres" keep "their own structural integrity and independence" and are able to maintain "their own linguistic and stylistic peculiarities" ("Discourse" 321).

However, the *Almanac* is neither formless mush nor static rigidity. The inclusion of multiple genres enables dialogue within and between the incorporated genres. The genres, says Bakhtin, "possess [their] own verbal and semantic forms for assimilating reality." The genres have the capacity, as well-worked-out forms, to assimilate reality in words. When the various genres enter the novel, says Bakhtin, they "bring into it their own languages, and therefore stratify the linguistic unity of the novel and further intensify its speech diversity in fresh ways" ("Discourse" 321). Thus, for Bakhtin, the inclusion of discrete genres within the larger structure of the novel engenders two distinct but inseparable implications. First, the incorporated genres maintain their marks, peculiarities and integrities as genres. Second,

these smaller genres stratify the larger genre—in Joaquin's case, the almanac—and offer further evidence as regards its formal diversity. One can liken this effect to the presence of platinum in the chemical reaction described in T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent." For Eliot, the presence of platinum enables the reaction to happen; the platinum, however, remains unchanged. San Juan considers the *Almanac* as the interfusion of the calendar and the newspaper. Joaquin's method of accommodating these forms is, for San Juan, likened to an "experimental handling": the "religious calendar of festivities crossed with that typically modernist invention, the newspaper and illustrated weekly" (*Subversions* 9). The combination, says San Juan, results in an "unrelenting flattening out of everything—the petty, the accidental, the numinous—into exchangeable counters" (*Subversions* 9).

Although San Juan rightly points out the potential of the *Almanac* to flatten material, the incorporation of diverse genres nonetheless demonstrates a sense of manifold fullness. Apart from the diversity of material, which Joaquin culls from various points in Philippine history, the *Almanac* also contains multiple forms. Apart from the genres Joaquin indicates in the preface—calendars, weather charts, sanctorals and short essays—the almanac also includes minutiae such as instructions on how to make simple things for the household, recipes, and light verse.

The calendars indicate important dates in Catholic and national history, a concern I will explore more fully in the succeeding section. For example, the entry for 3 February mentions that that day was the start of the battle for Manila's liberation in 1945. This day is also the feast day of St. Blaise, the saint to whom one prayed if one had diseases of the throat. In the 4 February entry, Joaquin notes that that day was the start of the Philippine-American War in 1899. This is also the feast day of Sts. Andrew Corsini and Catherine de Ricci (*Almanac* 25).

Joaquin casts a horoscope for each of the zodiac signs. For instance, in the horoscope for Pisces, Joaquin says that Neptune enters the house of Pisces on 19 February. This "double marine association" makes Pisceans "good swimmers and sailors" and excellent in "all water sports and occupations." Neptune's nebulosity, says Joaquin, accounts for the Piscean's tendency to be "very positive about the vaguest things" and at the same time be anxious over "suspicions that have no basis in fact" (*Almanac* 30). Furthermore, Neptune's rotation and revolution provide further basis for Joaquin's horoscope. Neptune's day is "only 15 hours long" while "its year is equivalent to 165 earth-years." The Piscean, therefore, is "very good at quick spur-of-the-moment jobs but becomes sluggish when confronted with projects that demand patience, time and deliberation." The Piscean tends to become successful "in the short haul" but fails "in the long run." As regards matters of love, the Piscean, like the fish, is "very delicate in flavor" and should not be cooked too long or else its flavor would be lost. What a Piscean needs is a "quick courtship, and quick preliminary love-play" (*Almanac* 31).

As regards the weather, Joaquin points out that in January, the cold weather will persist until the feast of Our Lady of Carmel (29 January), and that the "winds from Siberia mean chills and fevers, running noses, the *trancazo* [flu], and harvest fiestas on the countryside" (3). Adverse weather calls for special recipes: for July, the start of the rainy season ("big water ahead"), Joaquin suggests "rum with calamansi" to "give you a glow." Alternatively, one can, "in a heated pan drop a heaping tablespoonful of butter and, as it simmers, a dash of sugar." This mixture can then be poured in cup of rum (*Almanac* 177).

Despite the almanac's mixture of genres—suggestively evoked by Joaquin's image of mixing butter, sugar and rum—Joaquin nevertheless maintains the integrity of the assimilated forms. The calendars mark events; the essays describe, narrate, and offer arguments and propositions; the horoscopes prognosticate. Bakhtin says that "such incorporated genres

usually preserve within the novel their own structural integrity and independence, as well as their own linguistic and stylistic peculiarities" ("Discourse" 321).

Bakhtin evokes the image of taste when describing heteroglossia: the language of the heteroglossic text, says Bakhtin, is not "an abstract system of normative forms"; by contrast, the "words have a 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour" ("Discourse" 293). Hence, Bakhtin points out that these genres bring with them traces and marks: instead of a flattening out and an effacement of boundaries, Bakhtin argues for both erasure and maintenance of distinctions: "each word"—and in this case, each heteroglossic text—for Bakhtin, "tastes of the context . . . in which it has lived its socially charged life" ("Discourse" 293). Like Joaquin's alcoholic drink, it is as if the ingredients—butter, sugar, rum—are mixed yet maintain distinct flavours. Joaquin's endeavour to dismantle and reconstitute aspects of Philippine historical and social reality is not just a matter of reorganising material; it is bound up with considerations of form. Following Bakhtin, each incorporated genre in the *Almanac* keeps its mark of distinction, its taste, its "linguistic and stylistic peculiarity"—essays bear conventions of prose forms (narration, description, comparison and contrast), calendars point to significant dates, horoscopes tell your fortune—and yet the incorporation of a sheer amount of particular detail in Joaquin's text results in the stratification, diversification, and fracture of what otherwise seems a monolithic Philippine reality: rum with calamansi, a warning that cold weather would last until a certain feast, the inauguration of a war. And yet, for all its formal and material diversity—its fractured and diverse characteristics—the *Almanac* nonetheless assumes the shape of association: a serenade shares textual space with a carnival, a calendar with a recipe, a delight in disorder on one hand, a pleasure in pattern on the other.

## "Giving Calendar Dates Their Physiognomy": Compression, Conjunction and Direction in the Calendars

In this section, I examine Joaquin's calendars from the standpoint of Benjamin's notion of correspondence. After the previous section's investigation of the heteroglossic dimension of Joaquin's *Almanac*—as regards the relationship between calendars, essays, horoscopes, recipes, among others—I now focus, in this section, on the specific properties of the calendars and, in the section that follows, on the essay. In this section, I elaborate on three implications that emerge from Joaquin's calendrical correspondence: first, I argue that Joaquin's calendars are condensations of Philippine history, akin to a Benjaminian time-lapse camera, where an extended period of time is distilled into a moment; second, I claim that the calendars yoke together, compress and commemorate aspects of nation and religion; and third, I argue that the calendars simultaneously assume opposite orientations: past and future. Hence, the calendars are expressions—in condensed form—of the simultaneously cohesive and dissolute characteristics of Joaquin's aesthetic.

In a most basic sense, a calendar marks time: by mentioning what makes that day significant, the entry distinguishes one day from another. According to Leofranc Holford-Strevens, the Romans marked "the beginnings of months" by calling those days *kalendae*, a word which was derived from the "ancient verb *calare*" (which means "to proclaim"). The *kalendae* signified that the "new moon had originally been announced on that day" (29). Joaquin also acknowledges its Roman provenance, as well as its transmutation into Filipino: not only did the *kalendae* "announce the start of each year and of each month," the term also became the basis for the Filipino word *kalendaryo* (13).

For example, Joaquin distinguishes 20 August from other days by indicating four important events: (1) the feast day of St. Bernard of Clairvaux; (2) the feast day of St.

Samuel; (3) the death of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1572; and (4) the outbreak of cholera in Manila in 1882 (201). St. Bernard (1090-1153) founded the Benedictine house at Clairvaux, France and wrote "De Laudibus Novae Militiae," a document which "traces the outlines of the Rule of the Knights Templars who soon became the ideal of French Nobility." Also among Bernard's best-known writings are 86 sermons on "The Canticle of Canticles" ("St. Bernard"). Miguel Lopez de Legazpi was one of the first Spanish conquistadors; his expedition to, and the founding of, Manila in 1571 led to the unification of the Philippines under colonial rule. Historian Ambeth Ocampo writes that in the 1882 epidemic, Jose Rizal's brother, Paciano, reported to him [Jose] that "'an average of 15 persons die daily"; also, the danger of infection forces victims to be abandoned by family members ("Epidemics").

It should be apparent that, in reality, years, sometimes even centuries, separate the events indicated in Joaquin's calendar entries. For instance, Legazpi's career is one of the starting points of Spanish colonisation in the Philippines. The 1882 cholera outbreak, by contrast, stands close to the end of the Spanish presence in the country. The events and persons indicated by the calendar references also inhabit different geographical and discursive spaces. St. Bernard, for example, participated in the religious and political disputes of 12th century France. The refutation of Abelard by Bernard, says the 19th century preacher Ratisbonne, was one of the "greatest episode[s] of the twelfth century" ("St. Bernard"). By contrast, for historian Celestina P. Boncan, the cholera epidemic proved to be a medical dilemma, taking lives from various areas in Manila such as Pateros, Makati, and Muntinlupa ("Historical").

A recourse to Walter Benjamin's notion of correspondence may help illuminate the nuances of Joaquin's calendrical composition. For Benjamin, correspondences "are the data of recollection" ("Motifs" 334). The scholar Christopher Prendergast unpacks the notion of correspondence further by tracing its development from Baudelaire to Benjamin. He begins

by distinguishing three aspects inherent in Baudelaire's deployment of the term:

"psychological, aesthetic and metaphysical" (148). The psychological aspect pertains to the "theory of perception technically known as synaesthesia . . . the process whereby one order of sense-perception can evoke or be translated into another order." The aesthetic aspect refers to the "mutual suggestibility and convertibility of the arts," an example of which would be that the "colours of painting can evoke the tonalities of music" (148). The metaphysical component pertains to the continuity between the "earthly and the transcendental, the material and the spiritual"; the seamlessness between antipodes has a prelapsarian element: it is to the "analogical language given by God to man before the fall and ensuring an unbroken passage from the natural to the divine" (149).

For Prendergast, Baudelaire's understanding of correspondence is undergirded by the notion of harmony. Common to the psychological, aesthetic and metaphysical aspects is the idea of "overcom[ing] [of] division and fragmentation and the replac[ement] [of] discord with concord" (149). In other words, Benjamin's inheritance of the Baudelairean inflection of the synthesis of disparities leads him to construe the idea of correspondence as part of a "project of repairing broken experiences" (149); the act of putting together what has been torn asunder is enabled by memory: the diverse data of remembrances finding consonance in a temporal reference.

It may seem that by accommodating bits and pieces of information, Joaquin fills calendrical space with historical trivia. However, seen from a Benjaminian perspective, by letting the day function like a magnet that attracts historical *disjecta membra*, Joaquin evokes another kind of correspondence: the temporal. Temporal conjunction, as an organising principle, raises the possibility of disparate events having a sense of concord instead of discord. Furthermore, as Prendergast points out, the prospect of evoking or translating one order in terms of another—which is characteristic of Benjamin's understanding of



Baudelaire—is also present in Joaquin. In other words, by citing details from discrete categories, Joaquin underscores not only their discreteness in time and place but also their potential for continuity and correspondence in the compressed series of points represented by calendrical time. As I demonstrate shortly, Joaquin's calendars enable the categories of nation and religion, as well as past and future temporal orientations, to be viewed in the light of each other.

The notion of compression, moreover, is akin to what Benjamin describes as "history in time-lapse mode" ("Concept" 395). For Benjamin, the "initial date of the calendar"—and, by extension, all the dates in a calendar—are expressions of the condensation of history: events and personalities are compressed into an entry. For Benjamin, calendars are "monuments of a historical consciousness" ("Concept" 395); in Joaquin's *Almanac*, the monthly calendars are monuments in miniature.

It is equally crucial to consider exactly the national and religious elements being compressed in Joaquin's calendars, as well as the temporal orientation such compressions suggest. In a study of 191 national calendars, the sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel distinguishes between the two types of event commemorated. One set contains "religiously significant events that occurred in the very distant past" and the other set includes "politically significant events that occurred in the last two hundred years" (327). What Zerubavel underscores is that calendar entries demonstrate a "delicate balance between . . . national and religious attachments" (331). Zerubavel's analysis further underscores the "inevitable structural complexity" of the "collective identity" of the readers (331). By noting the distinct yet interfused nature of calendar entries—the mingling of secular and sacred—Zerubavel points out the calendar becomes a site of "multiple histories" (331).

Zerubavel, however, does not provide extensive examples of the national and religious calendrical cycles of his 191 samples. A closer look at the Christian and Philippine

calendrical cycles should further illustrate Zerubavel's findings, especially in terms of the Philippine—and more specifically, Joaquin's—context.

The Christian calendar has "four main elements": (1) the "cycle of the liturgical day"; (2) the "weekly cycle of days"; (3) the "Paschal cycle of movable feasts which move with the date of Easter"; and (4) the "cycle of fixed feasts falling on fixed dates" ("Calendar [Christian]"). What must be underscored is that the Christian calendrical cycle—starting from the level of the liturgical day all the way to the larger temporal framework of the year—is regarded as both a celebration of "Christ's mystery" and the "expectation of his coming again" ("General Norms"). The calendar of the Christian church signifies both commemoration and anticipation: the yearly cycle is a looking back at the mystery of Christ's incarnation, life, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, as much as it is a looking forward to his second coming in the fullness of time ("General Norms").

The most significant period in the liturgical year is the Easter Triduum. During this period, the "passion and resurrection of Christ" is remembered, and the significance of the paschal mystery is emphasised: "[Christ] destroyed our death, [by] rising he restored our life." The destruction of death and the restoration of life constitute the redemption of the Christian. The seasons before and after the Triduum are also significant. The "fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost" are treated as if they were "one great Sunday" ("General Norms"). The Lenten Season—which begins with Ash Wednesday—is intended to prepare Christians for the commemoration of Easter. Next in significance to the Easter Triduum—and the seasons that precede and follow it—is the Christmas season. During this time, Christians are enjoined to remember "Christ's birth and early manifestations" ("General Norms"). Advent—the period preceding Christmas—prepares Christians in two ways: (1) it predisposes Christians to the upcoming Christmas season; and (2) it prepares Christians for "Christ's second coming at the end of time." Thus, the Christian calendar—with its emphasis

on feasts, devotional practices and anniversaries of saints—can be seen as an "unfold[ing of] the entire mystery of Christ," not simply in terms of the now, but in anticipation of his future arrival ("General Norms").

In terms of the recent Philippine context, a list of national holidays was indicated in Executive Order 292—which enforced the Administrative Code—in 1987. Regular holidays indicated in EO 292 were New Year's Day, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Araw ng Kagitingan (9 April), Labour Day, Independence Day (12 June), National Heroes Day (last Sunday of August), Bonifacio Day (30 November), Christmas, and Rizal Day (30 December). Special days observed nationwide were All Saints Day (1 November) and the last day of the year. In 2007, Republic Act 9492—an amendment of EO 292—added Eidul Fitr as a regular holiday and Ninoy Aquino Day (21 August) as a nationwide special day. RA 9492 was notable for having made movable several previously fixed holidays. For instance, Araw ng Kagitingan, Labour Day, Independence Day, National Heroes Day, Bonifacio Day, and Rizal Day were all moved to the Monday nearest their initial date of commemoration. This drew criticism from various quarters, among them sociologist Randolph David, who commented that "national holidays lose their inspirational and instructional value when the original dates of their remembrance are sacrificed to give way to long weekends" ("Politics").

More recently, the Office of the President issued Proclamation 1841: the list of regular holidays, special non-working days, and special holidays for all schools for 2010. One interesting aside is that the proclamation does not generally indicate the reasons for marking those days in the calendar. Except for a short note on the EDSA Revolution Anniversary—which "restored and ushered political, social and economic reforms in the country" and "serves as an inspiration to Filipinos everywhere"—the historical underpinnings of the commemorated events are not mentioned.

In the essay "Why We Remember," David, who takes his bearings from Friedrich Nietzsche, says that there are three kinds of history: monumental, antiquarian, and critical. Monumental history recalls the "greatness of past generations" (24). Antiquarian history "instills reverence in a person for things that recall his origins and root them in his country's soil" (25). Finally, critical history "demands the ability to repudiate institutions, an entire way of life inherited from the past, a first nature given to us by tradition" (25). Clearly, holidays are aspects of monumental history, bringing into prominence lives of great Filipinos instrumental in shaping the course of national development.

If, for Joaquin, each day is a locus for the potential cohabitation of elements that are historically, discursively, and geographically disparate, then the entire calendar—and Joaquin has taken pains to provide entries for each day of the year—may be said to be a representation of the fusion of two sets of complementary yet conflicting temporalities. With the grafting of these two temporalities onto each discrete day—and for every day of the year—Joaquin's calendar demonstrates, by intertwining national and religious timeframes, the polysemy of time.

Furthermore, the temporalities of nation and religion have their own specific origins and future trajectories. For Christians, the liturgical year is the occasion for the "formation of the faithful by means of devotional practices . . . instruction, and works of penance and mercy" (Liturgical). The formation prepares Christians for Parousia, Christ's second coming. The Christian calendar turns simultaneously to the past and to the future: for instance, by commemorating a saint for each day, or by indicating parts of the year that are solemn, the calendar links the present with canonical figures and events, which in turn, serve as examples for emulation and instruction into the faith, and by extension, the possibility of future salvation.

For the Philippine context, especially for historians of nationalist persuasion, commemorating past events is important because not only do they [the commemorated events] refer to past achievements, they also show the prospect of their future recurrence. In this sense, in the calendar, past reality and future possibility mingle in the same entry. David identifies the future orientation of commemoration: future events are possible because the past has shown that they have happened once and may happen again. As Nietzsche says: "It is the knowledge that the great thing existed and was therefore possible, and so may be possible again" (14). In this light, the achievements of Rizal become, for David, "emblematic for successive generations of young Filipinos who seek personal excellence and achievement as signifiers of their nation's worth and self-esteem" (25). Bonifacio, similarly, serves as "an antidote to easy resignation when faced with the seeming impossibility of our current struggles" (25). By indicating, for example, 30 November and 30 December as holidays (and here the resonance with "holy day" is apt) the government acknowledges the contribution of these heroes to the well-being of the nation. As David points out, they are looked upon by successive generations: each generation draws its sense of worth from a particular interpretative grasp of its national heroes and historical events.

For Benjamin, "to write history means giving calendar dates their physiognomy" ("Central Park" 165); calendar dates, in this sense, are the outlines of a face, which historical narratives will then fill out. The outlines of the faces in Joaquin's calendar entries in the *Almanac* reveal a Janus-like quality. The Janus-like characteristic is seen in two ways: first, the almanac's commemorative aspect—its potential to proclaim and announce—has two temporal orientations; its commemorative turn to history (a proclamation not just of past events but also of unfulfilled ones) is inseparable from its turn to the future (an announcement of possibilities). Second, by employing correspondence and compression, Joaquin enables discrete entries of nation and religion to occupy shared calendrical spaces. In

the *Almanac*, the calendar entries assume faces that gaze both back and forward in time with expressions that have both national and religious features.

### **"The Crystal of the Total Event": Fragmentary Historiography in the Essays**

This section turns from the calendar aspect and engages with the essays of the *Almanac*. I take my cue from Walter Benjamin's montage method of constructing history—and the attendant concept of dialectics at a standstill—and put forward two arguments. First, I claim that the entries, constructed in the manner of Benjaminian montage, are characterised by a refusal to resolve into unified, linear narratives. Second, despite the discontinuities, Joaquin is nevertheless attentive to conjunctions, resemblances and missed opportunities. These aesthetic strategies of fragmentation and conjunction have political implications: discontinuous representations interrogate and undercut fixed linear forms of history; attentiveness to conjunction and thwarted opportunities expose not just failures but also the incipient possibilities inherent in historical situations: possibilities which, when recognised by readers, may be actualised in the future.

For Benjamin, the notion of dialectics at a standstill is the confluence of a number of methodological and political concerns. As regards method, the notion of dialectics at a standstill takes its bearings from the need for Benjamin to "conjoin a heightened graphicness to the realization of the Marxist method" (*Arcades* 461). This link between presentation and politics involves the introduction of "the principle of montage into history" (*Arcades* 461). For Benjamin, this process is related to architectural and engineering work: it involves the "assembl[y] [of] large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components" (*Arcades* 461). A metonymic quality informs such a construction: the "small individual moment," once analysed—and for Benjamin, such an analysis takes the form of

juxtapositions—can evoke "the crystal of the total event" (*Arcades* 461). For Benjamin, these jostlings and juxtapositions are not fanciful and frivolous reorderings and recombinations of historical minutiae: dialectics at a standstill positions itself in opposition to, and therefore, "break[s] with[,] vulgar naturalism" in historiography (*Arcades* 461).

For Benjamin, in addition, the images evoked by such juxtapositions must be imbued with the quality of sudden and illuminating synchronicity, a confluence of timeframes "wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation" (*Arcades* 463). What is crucial is that the finely cut components are not simply set in "temporal" ("what has been" next to "the now") but in "figural" relation (*Arcades* 463): the process Benjamin proposes is not additive—not the accumulation of historical materials—but relational: a montage of materials producing a reaction. The dialectical image, therefore, is a constellation of discrete elements whose new and sudden relationship provokes illumination.

Dialectics at a standstill involves both the "movement of thoughts" and "their arrest as well" ("Concept" 396). When this double gesture occurs—the act of "thinking [that] suddenly comes to a stop in a constellation saturated with tensions"—Benjamin says that that configuration is given a "shock, by which thinking is crystallized as a monad" ("Concept" 396). What is crucial is that in Benjamin's formulation, these two seemingly contrapuntal movements—motion and pause, blast and containment—are inseparable: Benjamin considers this halt in the flow of the dialectic as the key "constructive principle" on which "materialist historiography" is based ("Concept" 396).

The scholar Rolf Tiedemann's gloss accentuates this conflation. For him, this "temporal core of history" is where progress "halts for a moment"; the crystalline formation—the dialectical image—is where the "*dynamis* of what is happening coagulates into *stasis*." In this space, "time itself [becomes] condensed into a differential": in this space, the "Now identifies itself as the 'Now of a particular recognizability'" (942). In short, when

motion becomes indistinguishable from its cessation, the standstill effected enables the present moment to recognise itself as inseparable from the past. For Tiedemann, Benjamin's historiographical method is also seen in terms of synchronicity and legibility. "Every present," says Tiedemann, "ought to be synchronic with certain moments in history, just as every past becomes 'legible' only in a certain epoch" (935).

A sense of political urgency—an imperative that suffuses the act of rescue and remembrance—informs the process of historical assemblage. In Benjamin's view, the elements which constitute the constellation are "phenomena" that have been recovered "from the discredit and neglect into which they have fallen" (*Arcades* 473). However, such obscurities—forgotten objects, sites of ruin—are not the only things marked for rescue; what is equally crucial is to salvage objects that have, "very often by a certain strain in their dissemination," been "enshrined by heritage" (*Arcades* 473). For Benjamin, such an "enshrinement" is undergirded by the narrative of conquest: such "cultural treasures" are suffused with a "lineage" that the historical materialist "cannot contemplate without horror": not only are such treasures produced by "the anonymous toil of others," the manner of their "transmission" is equally deplorable ("Concept" 391). In Benjamin's view, these cultural treasures are precisely the "spoils" that are displayed in a procession "in which current rulers step over those who are lying prostrate" ("Concept" 391). Therefore, one task of the dialectical method—an act both aesthetic and political—is to wrest these objects embedded in the narrative of the victor and re-inscribe them into a new constellation that lays bare the "barbaric" process in which they were either transmitted or rendered null and obscure.

The scholar Max Pensky's gloss on Benjamin illustrates this process further. For Pensky, Benjamin's method proposes that "*historical fragments* [emphasis in original] . . . can be constructed by removing them (via historical research) from the embeddedness in a particular context" (186). From such a context, where they have devolved into obsolescence,



obscurity and neglect—the "trash of history" (186)—the historical materialist takes them and recasts them in a "series of textual juxtapositions" where the "fragments constitute a constellation" (186). Pensky underscores the point made by Benjamin that the image formed by such a combination is typified by an emergent relation between fragments: a "new, *necessary* [emphasis in original] interpretation of the fragments' relationship with one another" (186). Moreover, for Pensky, Benjamin's method demands a critique of the original context from which the fragments came, as well as the contemporary moment in which the constellation is made. The montage, says Pensky, "oblige[s] an entirely new interpretation of the material culture from which they were wrested, and the relationship of that material culture to the present moment" (186-187). For Pensky, Benjamin's method of "rescue and redeploy[ment]" interrogates the historical context and the social processes that render them insignificant (187).

Benjamin's approach, according to the scholar Graeme Gilloch, involves "bring[ing] together elements of the past and present which, though perhaps inert and harmless in isolation, prove highly unstable and combustible in combination" (228). This potentially incendiary combination—whose development in Benjamin Gilloch traces from "Surrealist montage" to the "Proustian interweaving of remembrance and forgetting" (229)—is described in terms of salvage and rescue: the "present recovers an image from the past, as the 'now of recognisability'" (229). For Gilloch, the "dialectical image appears at a moment of temporary disturbance and correspondence, within an eddy in the flow of history" (229). What this means is that the dialectics at a standstill involves dissonance as much as consonance: a break in the progress of time so as to enable the prospect of the mutual recognisability—the possibility of cognition, however suffused with contradictions and tensions—between past and present.

For the scholar Harry Harootunian, Benjamin's method of reconfiguring the ways in which history is represented—akin to the "modernist move to 'think' the concrete by trying to find a place outside social abstraction" (63)—results in a form which makes possible the "welding together [of] heterogenous elements capable of eliciting significations that claimed neither univocity, stability, nor lasting coherence" (63). Harootunian's comment emphasises key aspects of Benjamin's historiographical method: its constructed nature, the heterogeneity of the materials involved, and the open-endedness of the resulting articulations. Like Pensky, Harootunian points out—following Jacques Derrida—that dialectics at a standstill involves a "double reading" that "simultaneously see[s] the fragment in relation to its 'text of origin' and yet grasp[s] it 'incorporated in a whole and different totality'" (64).

What Benjamin proposes with dialectics at a standstill is innovative and political: a concept and a method where aesthetics and politics are two gestures of the same action. Such an action is comprised of recovery and rearrangement of heterogeneous and often discarded elements whose placement in a new context results in the cognizance of new possibilities: nothing less than the "revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past" ("Concept" 396). Such a "construction," for Harootunian, involves the "'awakening' to remembrance of something that has been momentarily forgotten but never lost to consciousness" (79). This awakening is inseparable from stillness and pause: that "sudden, momentary pause, which now instantaneously incorporates for the mobilization of a political purpose in the present, elements that were once dispersed across the blank seriality of time" (79).

For Benjamin, in summary, historiographical work is best described in terms of assembly and montage: a "small individual moment" is juxtaposed to another moment in a method akin to montage. It is crucial to note that this method is not accumulative but relational: for Benjamin, the montage of discrete materials evokes a response—awakening

and shock—in the audience. I now turn to a demonstration of how the essays in the *Almanac* may be profitably read in the light of concepts offered by Benjamin.

For Joaquin, October was the month of Manila's "greatest fiestas [festivals]" (*Almanac* 248). Joaquin describes the "pageantry" of the festivals in Intramuros: the novena of the Santo Rosario and the procession of La Naval. Later in the month, at Santa Cruz, the novena of the Del Pilar started, followed by the celebrations at Binondo. For Joaquin, this month signified "one long festive chain" (*Almanac* 248). The most prominent members of the various Manila *arrabales* [boroughs]—took part in these festivals: the "proud women, loaded with diamonds" of Santa Cruz, the "wealthy Creole of San Nicolas" and the "new-rich Chinese of Calle Rosario [in Binondo]" (*Almanac* 248). Joaquin describes the atmosphere—both in terms of mood and meteorology—of the month: a "nippy wind" would "blow over the city" and the "Japanese lanterns at window and balcony" would move with the wind; the Chinese stores "in the alleys off the Escolta" would sell "hams and cheeses and apples and grapes and lichees"; one could buy boiled or roasted chestnuts at street corners or at church yards. Not only that, every night, there were many things to do: "solemn novena[s]," concerts, and "crowded *feria* [fairs] to be explored" (*Almanac* 248). For Joaquin, October—which "glittered with the most magnificent processions of the year"—was a time of celebrations and crowds, cool night breezes, fairs and foodstuffs.

After describing the October festivities, Joaquin looks at the history of the Franciscan order in the Philippines. Joaquin considers San Francisco as "one of the most popular churches in prewar Intramuros": it had the largest patio among the seven major churches in the walled city, and on this patio stood two churches—one housed Our Lady of the Angels, the other held a "gorgeous image of San Luis Rey in full regalia: crown and scepter and ermine robe"—and the Franciscan mother house (*Almanac* 248). Every Tuesday, the faithful would honor Saint Anthony of Padua and the "streets round about crowded up with hawkers

and vendors" (*Almanac* 248). For Joaquin, Tuesdays at the Franciscan patio were as "tumultuous" as Fridays in Quiapo. Joaquin traces the history of the Franciscans from their arrival in 1577 to their continued involvement in the Philippines four centuries hence. The Franciscans, says Joaquin, "spread out all over Southern Tagalog and Bicolandia" [southern parts of Luzon, the largest island of the Philippines], as well as established a number of parishes in Manila and Bulacan, a province north of Manila. Apart from converting the indigenous groups to Christianity, the Franciscans were also involved in health care: they established hospitals in Manila, Bicol, Los Baños, and Cavite. Furthermore, the Franciscans also wrote some of the first grammar books in Tagalog and Bicol—two of the major languages in Luzon—and "translated Scripture, doctrine, the prayerbook and the catechism" into those languages. They also "'translat[ed]' to Christianity" a number of "pagan rites . . . [like] the summer fertility feast of Obando, the tatarin ritual of Paco, and the turumba of Pakil" (*Almanac* 265).

After outlining the history of the Franciscans in the Philippines, Joaquin looks at the lanzones fruit. Joaquin narrates a myth associated with the lanzones: it was a "wild fruit," it was said, "originally . . . shunned as deadly" (*Almanac* 265). The "golden bunches ripened untouched and rotted on the bough." One day, narrates Joaquin, a "beautiful woman appeared" in the towns plentiful with lanzones, ate a piece of the fruit, and "bade the folk [to] eat . . . without fear." The people did as followed and found the fruit "sweet and wholesome" (*Almanac* 265). Joaquin says that according to the myth, the woman was none other than the Virgin Mary herself and that—since the lanzones has a number of dark spots on its surface—"her thumbmark is on the fruit to this day" (*Almanac* 266). Joaquin goes on to list the various areas in the country where lanzones is prevalent—from Southern Tagalog and Bicol to a number of parts of Mindanao—and describes the chief characteristics of the fruit: "round or elongated and freckles darkly as it ripens." The fruit and the tree have many uses: the sticky

juice of the fruit is used to treat sore eyes; the bark and leaves, when boiled, are used to treat stomach ache; and the "peelings, when dried and burned," were used, back "in the old days" as a fumigant. Joaquin ends this section by recounting the memories a boy in Pakil [a town in Laguna, a province south of Manila] who remembered that, during his childhood, the townsfolk lit bonfires at night "to keep bats away from the fruit" trees, resulting in scenes where "the mountains round the town glowed with lights at night" (*Almanac* 266).

After describing the lanzones, Joaquin proceeds to instruct his readers on how to make a fumigant from its peelings. First, the seeds have to be removed and the peelings have to be spread out under the sun until they are "thoroughly withered." Once dry, the peelings can be kept until they are to be used. To make the fumigant, a heap of coals has to be prepared in a suitable container; the peelings should lightly cover the coals. The fumigant can be set "under bed and chairs to smoke out bugs"; in the kitchen to ward off cockroaches; in "dark damp nooks, against fleas and mosquitoes" (*Almanac* 266). The fumes, Joaquin says, "are also said to have a soothing effect on asthmatics" (*Almanac* 266). Joaquin, though, cautions the readers, and says that these tips are an "strictly old wives' nostrum" (*Almanac* 266).

As the entries in the October chapter demonstrate thus far, the essays in the *Almanac* are variegated in subject and discontinuous in historical reference. Joaquin is concerned with the pageantry of October festivals, a history of the Franciscan religious order, the myth of origin of the lanzones as well as instructions on how to turn it into a fumigant. The second half of the chapter reinforces the quality of topical variety and historical disjunctiveness. Joaquin turns his attention to a history of Manila's Chinatown, a discussion of the Octoberian student, an account of the rivalry between the Binondo and Sta. Cruz boroughs of Manila, and, finally, a discussion of Halloween.

Joaquin's next section is a brief history of Chinatown. Joaquin says that in 1570, "there were only 40 married Chinese in Manila" (*Almanac* 266). In 1589, this number escalated to 4,000, and "by 1600 the number had risen to 15,000." In Joaquin's view, the rise in the Chinese population—who were "mostly South Chinese and from the lower classes"—could be attributed to their perception that living in Manila under the control of the Spaniards seemed far better than staying in their own country. For Joaquin, "even a ghetto in the Philippines" was considered as "a far freer world than their own land and no amount of pogrom could stop them from coming" (*Almanac* 267). Joaquin quotes the Spanish historian Morga, who quotes a Chinese scholar writing at the time; the scholar describes the migrating Chinese as "scum, ungrateful to China, of little account"—his bile apparent in his description of the Philippines: "the Island of Luzon is a miserable land inhabited only by devils and serpents" (*Almanac* 267). Joaquin then traces the changes in the location of Chinatown throughout Manila's history: Chinatown was first situated "on the bank of the Pasig where the Chinese traders landed and did business" (*Almanac* 267). Then the location shifted to an area inside Intramuros, "near the convent of the Dominicans, who had been placed in charge of the Chinese" (*Almanac* 267). Afterwards, the site moved to what is now Plaza de Santo Tomas. Another location for Chinatown was the "area that would become Arroceros and Plaza Lawton. Present-day Chinatown developed around two streets in the Binondo district: Calle Rosario and Calle Ongpin" (*Almanac* 267).

After the history of Chinatown, Joaquin turns to briefly consider the "Octoberian," a "prewar term for students who graduated . . . in October instead of normally in March" (*Almanac* 268). This is an occasion for Joaquin to digress on the academic year in the Philippines, which he says started "originally [as] a unit beginning in June and ending in March," and the later on "divided into semesters: from June to October, and from October to March" (*Almanac* 268). One consequence of the first kind of academic year was that if a

student failed a subject at any point during the year, s/he had to repeat the entire year, whereas, in the second kind, if s/he failed a subject, then s/he only had to make up for it during the first term, and would graduate in October (*Almanac* 268).

Joaquin's second to the last entry for the October chapter considers the rival Manila boroughs of Binondo and Santa Cruz. Binondo, according to Joaquin, was "the commercial capital of the Philippines through most of the 19th century" (*Almanac* 268). In the 1900s, Santa Cruz took over this pre-eminent position. Joaquin traces the origins of Binondo to the merger of two adjoining areas—Baybay ("most probably the ancient landing place of Chinese traders" [*Almanac* 268]) and Minondoc (the "island across the Pasig from Intramuros")—in 1594. In the 1640s, Binondo already had a "stone church with 50 large windows"; this church was decorated with "handsome tapestries and paintings" (*Almanac* 269). Moreover, the district was gaining attention as a "printing center, a port, and an emporium" and the wealthier the district became, the more its fiestas "rival[ed] in grandeur" the ones in Intramuros (*Almanac* 269). Concurrent to the rise of Binondo's fortunes was the development of Santa Cruz as a Jesuit mission and a farming area. Among the crops—"cabbages and peas and cucumbers," for instance—that were "very probably first raised" in the country were planted here (*Almanac* 269). A school was also founded in the area. Santa Cruz gained a reputation for its "heavy traffic and its commerce": agricultural products like "grain, milk, eggs, fruit, vegetables and other foodstuffs" brought from the country were being sold on boats on the canals (*Almanac* 269).

According to Joaquin, when the Chinese started to settle "in such numbers in Binondo," the elite members of the Tagalog class began to relocate to Santa Cruz. Joaquin traces this shift to the 1900s: by then Binondo "was on the wane" (*Almanac* 269). Furthermore, Santa Cruz became the focal point of an emergent intellectual middle class, and gained renown as an area of goldsmiths, blacksmiths, theatres and restaurants (*Almanac* 269).

Joaquin's final entry for October looks at Halloween, the "last of the four great witches' sabbaths of the year," and considered a "holy" time even before Christianity. For Joaquin, Halloween was significant because it was a time of transition: the death of the old year, and the beginning of a new on 1 November. It was, for Joaquin, a time when "new fires were kindled for the tribe and divinations made for the future," a time for "omens and auguries" (*Almanac* 271). Joaquin points out that the "witches" associated with Halloween were "actually priestesses of the old religion" who "invoke[d] the Great Mother Goddess." This goddess, in turn, for Joaquin, is associated with the "primeval cult of the moon": a symbol of the goddess who "died old on this night and was born young again the next instant." For Joaquin, this instantaneity was important: the witches "were both bewailing a death and hailing a rebirth" (*Almanac* 271). Joaquin links this lunar motif to the Philippines by noting that during the early years of Spanish colonisation there were "witches" (priestesses who resisted the encroachment of Christianity); "wild mountain goddesses" like Mariang Makiling, who Joaquin considers as having affinities with the goddess Diana, a moon goddess; and the occurrence of "witches' sabbaths, like the turumba and the tatarin" (*Almanac* 271).

Benjamin's remarks on fragmentary representations of history illuminate Joaquin's structuring of the essays in the *Almanac*. The crystalline moments valued by Benjamin appear, in Joaquin's *Almanac*, as the finely cut components. The October chapter contains an array of topics: the opulence of religious festivals; the brisk wind and the lanterns it would move; the endeavours of the Franciscans in health care, translation, and studies of grammar; myths and medicinal properties associated with lanzones; instructions on making a fumigant; the constantly shifting locations of Chinatown. Other chapters are equally diverse: in November, a comment on how Filipinos honour their dead—which, for Joaquin, may be traced to the overlaying of Catholic and pagan practices during the early Spanish



colonisation period—is followed by an account of the parties with Manila's high society during the American Commonwealth period.

Seen in this light, the entries of the *Almanac* demonstrate a kind of resistance to historicism insofar as they do not resolve into a linear, continuous representation of Philippine history. The entry on lanzones, for example, has no ostensible relation to the entry on Chinatown, which, in turn, has no relation to the entry on Halloween. The lanzones does not grow in Chinatown; Joaquin's discussion of Halloween incorporates lunar imagery and local goddesses: points which are not considered in other entries in the October chapter such as the entry on the Franciscans or the brief history of the boroughs of Binondo and Santa Cruz. The scholar Andrew Benjamin's comments on the dialectical image are instructive. For him, the dialectical image "involves the co-presence of what can neither be reconciled nor rendered synthetic" (111). Such irreconcilability is the mark of the "impossibility of the image's incorporation into the temporality of historicism or into the procession of concepts and activities that are articulated within that temporal unfolding" (111). Elements of the almanac are not additive but relational; following Walter Benjamin's ideas of the dialectic, the relation demonstrated by the almanac's essays is precisely the difficulty of reconciliation: in the *Almanac's* terms, the difficulty of resolving materials into a coherent narrative, the essays separated by chronological and causal gaps, each section a self-contained unit with no transition between them: fumigant, wind, grammar, commerce.

For Benjamin, the shock of fragmentation and discontinuity—and the simultaneous reconstitution in new forms—is an occasion for awakening. In Benjamin's schema, the disjointed temporalities act as a kind of shock against the narcotic of linear retellings of history. This "new [and] *necessary* interpretation of the fragments' relationship," as Pensky indicated earlier, results in that "unstable and combustible" quality which Gilloch describes as a "moment of temporary disturbance." This propensity to disturb—the ability to "create an

eddy in the flow of history," in Gilloch's phrase—relates with Joaquin's strategy of rearrangement of historical elements. Rafael's view, discussed earlier, connects Joaquin's aesthetics of rearrangement to the political project of decolonisation: for Rafael, Joaquin's work disrupts the process of forgetting initiated by "colonial and national lobotomies."

For Benjamin, shock is capable of "jolt[ing] the viewer" by making the artwork "tak[e] on a tactile quality" ("Work of Art" 267). Benjamin, who considers the concept of shock in view of the contrast between painting and the then-emergent forms of cinema, says that while the former "invites the viewer to contemplation," the audience of the latter does not have the chance to be meditative: the "train of associations in the person contemplating these images [in film] is immediately interrupted by new images" ("Work of Art" 267). Although much of Joaquin's almanac is textual—and to a certain extent, pictorial—Benjamin's consideration of the value of shock may be instructive. Joaquin develops a topic, offers interesting facts, statistics, anecdotal material, personal insights, and then breaks off his discussion and takes up another point. As demonstrated by the October chapter, this aesthetics of disruption is prevalent: the capsule history of Chinatown, for instance—a condensed account of the various shifts in the location of the borough throughout the centuries—is followed by a topic unrelated to it: the Octoberian student, which also features Joaquin's thoughts on the structure of the Philippine academic year.

To be sure, Joaquin's work does not take on Dadaist overtones, what Benjamin describes as a "vehement distraction" that "endeavours to "mak[e] artworks the center of scandal" ("Work of Art" 267). However, though the disruptions in the flow of Joaquin's essays demonstrate none of the vehemence and scandal associated with Dada, they nonetheless, in Benjamin's phrase, "induce heightened attention" ("Work of Art" 267). This must be seen in the light of Joaquin's aim—articulated in the *Almanac's* preface—to instruct and delight his readers. Moreover, interruption as a tactic to encourage attention is linked to

the effect of dismantling and revising the established and "dogmatic fixed pictures" of Philippine history.

I have demonstrated how the essays in the *Almanac* may be seen, on the one hand, as discontinuous. In what follows, I show how, despite their fragmentariness, the essays also demonstrate a sense of conjunction and resemblance, and, in Joaquin's *Almanac*, how attentiveness to detail is, following Benjamin, emblematic of an awareness of both missed possibilities and incipient redemption. As the previous section on the calendars indicates, commemoration is directed to the future as much as the past, and, following Benjamin, what commemoration calls attention to are not just actualised events but missed possibilities. Awareness of missed possibilities, therefore, may compel the ones—the readers of the *Almanac*—in the present-day to seek fulfillment and actualisation in the future.

For example, 20 January commemorates the Cavite Mutiny of 1872. The essay by Chris Antonette Piedad-Pugay of the National Historical Institute summarises the Filipino and Spanish versions of the mutiny and points out crucial factors that led to, and resulted from, the uprising. Among the precipitating factors, she notes: the disenfranchisement among the arsenal workers and elements of the native army; the implementation of strict policies by the Spanish governor-general; and the participation of Filipino clergy in the secularisation movement. The major consequence of the uprising was the execution of the native priests Gomez, Burgos and Zamora; this heightened Filipino animosity toward the Spaniards and prompted them to demand more reforms ("Two Faces").

Joaquin's essay in the *Almanac* does not depict the conflict. Rather, he focuses on two things: first, his depiction highlights the synchronicity between the start of the uprising and the commencement of a fiesta in January. Second, he focuses on two errors. One error is in the name of the fiesta. The second error is in terms of the nature of the explosions. The mutineers thought that the fireworks were to inaugurate combat, when in fact they were to

signal the start of a nine-day festival culminating on the 29th of January. The mutineers, Joaquin says, "had apparently been led to believe that there would be a simultaneous uprising in Manila, which they were to regard as a signal for their own coup in Cavite" (*Almanac* 20).

After the mutiny, Joaquin says, what was said among the Manileños was that the "mutineers mistook . . . 'the fireworks of Sampaloc'" for "martial explosions." This is what Joaquin seeks to amend in his entry. He points out that the fiesta of Sampaloc is in December, and could not have been the celebration held concurrently with the mutiny. What Joaquin says is that the mutineers saw fireworks from the Bilibid Viejo fiesta (an area near Sampaloc), and thought, wrongly, that their Manila counterparts had begun the revolt. Joaquin suggests that the fireworks on the night of 20 January 1872 "may well have been splendid enough to have been seen and heard in Cavite" (*Almanac* 20), some 15 km away from Manila. Hence, the errors which Joaquin concerns himself with in the *Almanac's* Cavite Mutiny entry pertain to: (1) the mutineers who thought that the fireworks were the start of concurrent revolts; and (2) the subsequent reception of the event, which assumed that the fireworks were for a fiesta meant for another time and location (i.e., it should be Bilibid Viejo in January instead of Sampaloc in December).

This example further illustrates Joaquin's predilection for representing conjunction: the uprising in Cavite was to have been "simultaneous" with the one in Manila. Furthermore, apart from temporal conjunction, Joaquin describes the adhesion—however ironic, since the mutineers were in error—between the religious and the secular: the fireworks for the festivities were interpreted as a "signal" by the participants of the uprising. Besides noting the importance of the uprising in the larger context of Philippine history—the event generated "repercussions" until the end of the 19th century—Joaquin's essay is sensitive to the errors and the missed chances evoked by the event: had the uprising been better coordinated, then there would have been greater chance of success.

It may seem peculiar for Joaquin to foreground what seems to be a minor trifle. Most scholarship on the Cavite Mutiny highlights the drama and the repercussion, framing the event in terms of the search for Filipino self-determination and the response of Spain to these attempts at emancipation. But Joaquin does not analyse historical forces as much as he highlights seemingly overlooked details. This strategy may be illustrated by a turn to Benjamin.

In "On the Concept of History," Benjamin remarks that the past contains the idea and image of possibility—and the thwarting—of happiness; these, in turn, are "indissolubly bound up with the idea of redemption" (389). Discernible in the present are traces of missed opportunities: the atmosphere of the now contains "a breath of the air that pervaded earlier days" and the "voices that we hear" are resonant with "an echo of now silent ones" ("Concept" 390). The critic Werner Hamacher, commenting on Benjamin's view of history, argues that for Benjamin, the past not only refers to "lived-out facts that survive, facts that could be recorded as positive objects of knowledge." Rather, what also survives are "unactualized possibilities": the resonance of now silent voices. For Benjamin, continues Hamacher, historical time was filled with "the unactualized, the unfinished, failed [and] thwarted" (41). Historical representation, hence, accommodates not just successes and actualities—what usually gets recorded in history—but also the possibilities that were cut off before their full fruition.

Two things are crucial with Benjamin's thesis and Hamacher's gloss. First: the desire for redemption is inseparable from a previous experience of missed chances, which is evoked by Benjamin by way of imagery like voices and air. Second: representations of history should include not just facts and positive objects of knowledge. Rather, depictions of the past should also account for failures, dead ends, missed opportunities, and errors.

By highlighting the small detail, the overlooked material, the seemingly fanciful evocation, Joaquin's historiography is akin to an accumulation of Benjaminian data of remembrances, and what they commemorate are singular, irreplaceable, unrepeatable possibilities. For example, in the chapter on August, Joaquin writes about the early 1900s, when Daniel Burnham, the "foremost American city-planner of his day," embarked on a project to expand and modernise Manila. Burnham "envisioned [Manila] as a metropolis inhabited by millions, with multi-laned avenues radiating from its central districts" According to Joaquin, Burnham's other proposals included "a government center occupying all of Wallace Field," a Philippine Capitol building that would be the centrepiece of a group of buildings of different government bureaus and departments, a mighty quadrangle, with a lagoon in the centre and monument to Rizal at its Luneta end" (*Almanac* 214).

The Burnham Plan was, for Joaquin, "audacious": it was a prospect "dreamed up by a very typical empire-day American" who was "not afraid of the grand manner." According to Joaquin, the Philippine Legislature "agreed to set aside two million pesos for the execution of the plan"; the London *Times* picked up the story and called the plan a "miracle by an Aladdin." However, several years into the project—and when the fund had reached around 16 million pesos—then-President Quezon diverted the money to support irrigation projects in the countryside. As a result of the dwindling funds, only three buildings in Burnham's plan were constructed: the Legislative Building, which was built from 1920 to 1926, and the buildings for the agriculture and finance departments, which were finished at the eve of the Second World War. Quezon had overruled Burnham's plan by "creating a new capital city outside Manila." For Joaquin, the three buildings in central Manila signify "our happiest achievement in the neo-classic manner." For Joaquin, that period—the height of the American empire days—was "a moment in our history" where the "style of the Romans

suiting our temper perfectly and we created a structure that had grace and dignity" (*Almanac* 214).

Although Joaquin overlooks the imperial connotations of his comparison—the grand manner of the colonising Americans, the allusion to Rome and neoclassical architecture—what is evident in Joaquin's account of the city's development during the American period is the sense of transience and the missed chance at greatness suggested by the abandonment of Burnham's plan, in general, and the numerous unreconstructed buildings, in particular. The three existing buildings, for Joaquin, stand as manifestations of a "glorious dream" and at the same time, a reminder that "we can no longer express ourselves confidently in that style." For Joaquin, the unconstructed buildings and thoroughfares in Burnham's plan are as crucial as the actually existing structures: although the Legislative, Finance and Agricultural Buildings still stand, and the Rizal Monument at Luneta Park still serves as a memorial to the national hero, the other prospective elements in Burnham's design were abandoned: the avenues unconstructed, the "vast Capitoline group of structures" unbuilt, the miracle and dream untranslated from blueprint to material structures (*Almanac* 214).

This Benjaminian view, which accommodates not just what happened (i.e., the positive objects of knowledge, the facts) but also what could have been (i.e., the errors, the ironic conjunctions) relates to Joaquin's historiography. To return to the passage on Burnham's plan: Joaquin mentions happiness—albeit of the middle and ruling class—and the thwarted plans of the area. Joaquin's essay takes into account impressions that range from grandeur to ghostliness, ending the passage on a simultaneously spirited yet melancholy note: the existing buildings—elegant as they are—stand as a memorial to a dream; they are also a reminder of the grandeur that could have been.

This preponderance for citing the seemingly circumstantial, oblique and tangential is nevertheless related to future prospects. The *Almanac* notes both the missed chance and the

prospect of happiness had the chance been actualised: in this light, the *Almanac* entries on the thwarted Cavite Munity and unrealised plans of Daniel Burnham offer a "secret index by which [the past] is referred to redemption" ("Concept" 390). Had the mutineers found reinforcements, for instance, perhaps the insurrection might have had a happier result. Had Burnham's plans been realised, perhaps Manila might have had more elegant buildings. But it is precisely by indicating past moments of unactualised happiness—the seemingly festive start of an insurrection, inaugurated by fireworks; the beauty of the architecture in one of the central districts in Manila—that, at some point in the future, the current squalor may be transcended. The prospect of future redemption is linked to elements of the thwarted and unfinished past insofar as the past is recognised by the present. Only upon recognition can the present understand that the past demands from them—the ones in the now—a sense of "settlement, correction and fulfillment" (Hamacher 41).

This is why Joaquin's *Almanac* is replete with compressions, coincidences, details. Hamacher, commenting on Benjamin, notes that "in order for another moment to touch another moment, for a Now-point to enter into a configuration with another Now-point, and in order for historical time to arise out of this configuration, this moment has to be constituted as a reference (*Verweis*), an indication (*Hinweisung*), and an instruction (*Anweisung*) towards this other moment" (51). With his aesthetic strategies—a series of dates and not a timeline of events, the fragmentary essay and not the grand narrative—Joaquin's writing of history seems open, attentive to associations, observant of both gaps between, and relations among, disparate points in time.

Details in the *Almanac* seek resemblances and correspondences: dates that coincide, events that match, details that resonate. Joaquin's *Almanac*, far from being a repository of data, comes to terms with the futility and meaninglessness of history. It does so by recovering details and by seeking patterns while at the same time laying bare the disjunction of materials



and the discrepancies of forms. These patterns do not follow the "mechanical causal connections" and "mechanical consequences, directions and consistencies" (Hamacher 51) which Benjamin deplored in historical writing. History is "not a connection of causes," says Hamacher, "it is a connection of affect and intention" (51). Joaquin's *Almanac* is a temporal structure of feeling: it attends to what seem to be the flotsam and jetsam of history: the telling detail, the temporal rhymes, the miscues in time.

Moreover, the essays, precisely by way of their construction, evoke a sense of openness: the gaps between the elements are as crucial as the elements themselves. Benjamin writes that the dialectics at a standstill produces a figural relation between the constellated elements: it is this figural relation of openness that Joaquin proposes by way of the innovative structure of his almanac. By offering a structure that privileges porosity, non-linearity, and simultaneity, the *Almanac's* addressees—principally Manileños, but theoretically any reader—are forced to reckon not just with what Joaquin has blasted apart but also with what he has put together: to come to terms with the relations between fumigant and myth, architecture and festival, calendar and essay. Joaquin's aesthetics of historiography doubles back and forth from present to past, referring simultaneously to one of the most ancient of genres, and to an open, indeterminate present shot through with chips of the past.

### **"Headier Bits of Reading": Aesthetics and Politics of Non-Linear Historiography**

This concluding section of the chapter considers the implications of Joaquin's aesthetic strategies in the calendars and essays in the light of the notion of non-linear emplotment in historical writing. I argue that by privileging an aesthetics of interruption, Joaquin's *Almanac* critiques developmentalist notions of linear historical writing, opens up

the possibility of recuperation of the almanac form, and offers a bricolage and composite representation of the Filipino nation.

In "Outlines of a Non-Linear Emplotment of Philippine History," the historian Reynaldo Ileto likens the work of the historian to that of a "cutting operation." For Ileto, the act of cleaving has ambivalent results. On the one hand, the historian—especially the one "occupy[ing] the site of dominant centres"—has the capacity to "remember . . . that which it deems meaningful for [the centre's] development." By contrast, for Ileto, remembering is inseparable from forgetting: for the historian ensconced in the centre, what is "suppress[ed]" are elements which run contrary to narratives of development: elements which are deemed as "dissonant, disorderly, irrational, archaic, and subversive" (154). Hence, for Ileto, the "developmentalist" historian's ambivalent yet powerful position rests in his ability to simultaneously inscribe and erase, and his aim is to construct a linear narrative of development.

The elements that are remembered—the "data of the past"—allow the historian to construct a narrative that hews to notions of progress: materials may be "strung together into a trajectory of emergence, growth, complexity and increasing rationality." Moreover, the narrative which underscores emergence and growth often assumes a triumphalist mood: such a trajectory, for Ileto, "enables great moments and individuals to be celebrated" (154); individuals overcome difficulties, a period of adversity nevertheless results in success.

Furthermore, as Ileto demonstrates in *Critical Questions on Nationalism: A Historian's View*, this form of linear emplotment is used by both the establishment and the opposition. For instance, the opening volumes of Marcos's *Tadhana* begin with an account and analysis of the "pre-Hispanic roots of Filipino heritage." In Marcos's version of events, the origin of the "future Filipino nation is to be found in the idealized pre-Spanish barangay." Another major section of the series considers the 350 years of the Spanish regime and looks

at ways in which Filipinos "struggle[d]" with and "participate[d] in the Hispanization process, before moving towards an idea of a national community" during the latter part of Spanish rule. From 1872 to 1898, the Philippines would move from "counter-society" to "the birth of the nation-state." In its final volumes—from 1898, when Filipinos declared independence from Spain, to 1972, when Marcos proclaimed Martial Law and subsequently inaugurated the New Society—the *Tadhana* narrative arc "consists of realizing this dream, this destiny" of national sovereignty and identity (*Critical Questions* 5).

However, as Ileo points out, even Marcos's antagonists from the radical and militant left "surprisingly participate in the discourse . . . they condemn." For Ileo, in books like Renato Constantino's *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* and Amado Guerrero's *Philippine Society and Revolution*, the narrative presented—akin to *Tadhana*—"proceeds from the same construct of Fall-Darkness-Recovery (or Triumph)." *Past Revisited* and *Society and Revolution* offer an "image of a pre-Hispanic feudal order bastardized by colonialism"; they also present a "native culture contaminated by Christianity." To be sure, Ileo distinguishes between *Tadhana* and the Marxist-inspired *Past Revisited* and *Society and Revolution*. In Marcos's account of Philippine development, his New Society is apotheosised as the logical product of centuries of struggle for nationhood. By contrast, in Constantino's and Guerrero's histories, even though "class conflicts complicate the people's advance towards liberation," what Ileo finds notable is the notion of "the march forward" to attain the "end point": not simply "a nation-state [which is Marcos's point of view] but a condition of true independence and social levelling." Nevertheless, Ileo points out "the precision . . . by which the data of the 19th century is ordered" in the aforementioned texts. Although ideologically discrepant, both kinds of history assign "each personality, each social class, each movement, each event" a "proper place or role in the forward-movement" of the narrative (*Critical Questions* 6).

Such a narrative, positive and edifying as it may be, is nevertheless haunted by a "surplus of data that can be retrieved and restored into play"; such an excess—which Ileo describes as a "whole range of phenomena which have been discredited or denied a history"—becomes the primary material for "alternative histor[ies]." Rather than exclusively depict a situation of emergence and triumph, Ileo argues that an alternative history "should give equal status to interruptions, repetitions and reversals." Moreover, an alternative history strives to both recover and uncover: the alternative historian endeavours to reveal the "subjugations, confrontations, power struggles and resistances that linear history tends to conceal" ("Outlines" 154). For Ileo, an alternative history begins with the historian's cognizance of materials which are aberrant, archaic, subversive and dissonant: these elements, which have little chance of being written into linear histories that follow developmentalist models, must be recovered and recast in ways which highlight interruptions and reversals.

Hence, the "subversion of linear history"—which, for Ileo, is intimated in the choice of subject matter: neglected materials, the cast-offs and detritus of history—is a critique of "the 'developmentalism' that presently dominates the core of the state [or the] centre's ideology" ("Outlines" 154). In the writing of history, the aesthetics of interruption and fragmentation, in other words, have political implications: they critique, if not resist, the ideology of linearity and development which, for Ileo, is the key dominant force of the state.

Ileo's notion of non-linear emplotment makes plain the link between the aesthetics of interruption with the politics of resistance; the intertwining of form and politics is bound up with Benjamin's montage method of historical construction. For example, both Ileo and Benjamin propose the rescue of detritus and their restoration in historical texts. Both are aware that privileging materials that are aberrant, discordant, archaic and obsolete demands new methodological and aesthetic approaches: drawing from the strategies of the Surrealists,

the reinstatement of recovered material, for Benjamin, calls for juxtapositions and constellations. For Iletto, the materials which are "retrieved and restored into play" interrupt the dominant linear course of the official narrative.

I have demonstrated earlier how the *Almanac* may be profitably read in the light of Benjamin's views. Furthermore, there are two ways in which Joaquin's *Almanac* resonates with Iletto's points. First, Joaquin's choice of the almanac form—as opposed, say, to conventional historical narratives—may be viewed as an effort at rehabilitation. In a 1968 essay, Joaquin writes about Don Honorio Lopez, compiler of the *Kalendariong Tagalog* [*Tagalog Calendar*], considered by Joaquin as one of the precursors of his *Almanac*. For Joaquin, the *Kalendario*—along with other then-contemporary almanacs—"were so popular because they were so useful" ("Honorio " 44). For Joaquin—consonant with the other scholars indicated in the first chapter—almanacs were consulted by farmers, fishermen, cockfighters and other members of the community: almanacs indicated weather forecasts, tides and phases of the moon, and schedules of traveling fairs. There were also "headier bits of reading" such as "horoscopes, riddles, prophecies, vatic verses, . . . puzzles and trick drawings" ("Honorio" 44). For Joaquin, such instances of information and amusement are no longer present in contemporary almanacs. He points out that "the magic has vanished from today's calendars" and almanacs. Present-day samples, for Joaquin, are "little more than functional lists of dates"; they have been "stripped of overlay" and have been "secularized" ("Honorio" 44).

Joaquin's choice of the almanac form to convey Philippine history is a rehabilitation of that form: a way in which the overlay that has been stripped (reminiscent of Benjamin's notion of aura) has a chance to be restored. The Joaquinian disposition for restoration relates to Bakhtin's views of genre renewal. For Bakhtin, elements of the "archaic" and the contemporary are present in every example of any genre. For him, "in a genre . . . undying

elements of the *archaic*" [emphasis in original] are "preserved." But these preservations are not static or calcified reproductions handed down from one generation to another; for Bakhtin, "archaic elements are preserved . . . only thanks to their constant *renewal*, which is to say their contemporization" [emphasis in original]. In Bakhtin's view, each "individual work of a given genre"—in this case, Joaquin's *Almanac* as an instance within the genre—manifests temporal and generic simultaneity: a genre, for Bakhtin, is "always the same and yet not the same, always old and new simultaneously." For him, each contemporary sample of a genre demonstrates both preservation and renewal: Joaquin's text enables the almanac, as a genre, to be "reborn and renewed"; the "archaic elements preserved" now have the chance to stay "eternally alive" in the process of "renewing themselves." Moreover, for Bakhtin, memory is suffused into form: even though a "genre lives in the present," the formal devices incorporated and aesthetic strategies used are ways in which a genre "always remembers its past." Hence, for Bakhtin, the "correct understanding of a genre" is inseparable from a "return to its sources" (*Problems* 106).

The second way in which Joaquin's work relates to Iletto's point is in fragmentary and heteroglossic historical writing. As my study demonstrates, the multiplicity of forms in the *Almanac* implies a multiplicity of temporalities: the past and future orientations and the inseparability of religion and nation in the calendars share the same textual space with the discrete and discontinuous timeframes of the essays. The conflation of divergent temporal orientations and the fragmentary writing style in the *Almanac* is in keeping with Iletto's call for the reinstatement of forms of repetition and interruption in Philippine historical writing. For Iletto, such formal choices are not simply aesthetic; the turn to non-linear historical representation is a response to what Iletto describes as ideologies of developmentalism and what Benjamin characterises as the progress throughout homogeneous, empty time.

As Soledad Reyes has observed, Joaquin's work is situated in the interstices of social sciences and literature; Joaquin is as concerned with aspects of Philippine history and culture—especially when his views run counter to other influential perspectives—as he is interested in representing them in formally interesting and innovative ways. By occupying the space between two disciplines, Joaquin's work responds to historian Teodoro Agoncillo's call for the reinstatement of the imagination in historical writing. For Agoncillo, the main shortcoming of "dull and uninspired history books" is a propensity for their authors to accumulate facts without considering structure: an accretion of "facts and yet more facts without . . . weav[ing] them into an artistic whole" (9). Like Reyes who makes distinctions between Joaquin the creative writer and Joaquin the social scientist, Agoncillo distinguishes between history as social science and history as humanities. For Agoncillo, the historian should not just know "how to gather facts, how to verify them, and how to string them together, like beads of a rosary" (9). A historian must also consider foregrounding an "artistic sense": for Agoncillo, this means a "disciplined imagination and the ability to write with literary freshness" (1). Hence, for Agoncillo, aesthetics—the ability to offer "literary freshness"—is vital to historiography: a historian isn't involved with just data collecting and fitting rosary beads of material into the thread of theory, but should be "conceiv[ing] [of history as] a creative endeavor" (1). However, Agoncillo's notions of literary imagination and freshness pertain to issues of verisimilitude, not narrativity: for him, the imagination of the historian enables her to "recapture, even in capsule form, the color, the atmosphere, the action of past actuality" (2). In Agoncillo's view, the historian's imaginative faculty rests in her ability to demonstrate lifelikeness and not necessarily to problematise the limitations of linear narrative.

Nevertheless, Agoncillo's image of rosary beads strung together—emblematic of a linear conception of emplotment of which he implicitly disapproves—is bound up with Ileta's

and Benjamin's views. For Iletto, elements in linear historical narrative are "strung together in a trajectory of emergence [and] growth." Similarly, for Benjamin, a historian who ceases to be satisfied with "establishing a causal nexus among various moments of history" also "ceases to tell the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary" ("Concept" 397). In all three cases, what is being objected to is the propensity for thoughtless accumulation of material as well as an uncritical manner of writing that results in "dull and uninspired history books" (for Agoncillo) and linear narratives of progress (for Iletto and Benjamin).

For Mojares, changes in the aesthetic dimensions of the novel mark shifts in collective thought: for him, Rizal's novels, for example, "indexed the kinds of epistemological changes . . . that underlie the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century in the Philippines and elsewhere in the world." What is equally crucial is that for Mojares, epistemological shifts and breaks seen in the novel—and rendered, for instance, by multiple narratives and temporal simultaneities—are not simply portrayals of verisimilitude but are evidence of the novel as a textual construct. Rizal's novels are not simply "about [depicting] a historical period"; what is equally vital is to observe how these texts "construct [their] subject, selecting and deploying the materials and devices available to the writer." Thus, for Mojares, a text is an "enactment, a production of history itself" ("History" 2-3).

The aesthetics of montage and non-linearity in the *Almanac* are indications of such an epistemological shift. By using modernist-inspired strategies in an "artistic" manner which satisfies the need for "literary freshness" to consider Philippine history, society and culture, the *Almanac* interrogates linear, nativist and homogeneous categories of both literature and history. Joaquin's *Almanac* emphasises not just the depiction of various historical periods in Philippine history; he underscores, following Mojares, the selection and arrangement of materials: his almanac is both representation and construction, text and enactment.



Moreover, Joaquin's propensity to disturb aesthetic categories is inseparable from his alternative approach to representing the category of nation. The structure of the *Almanac* typifies, as my first chapter indicates, what Bhabha describes as the "split time of the national representation" and Brennan's view that literary texts such as the novel express "the nation's *composite* nature." Joaquin's "Culture as History" proposes the view that a person is an "unconscious anthology of all the epochs of man" and that he "may at times be moving simultaneously among different epochs" (51). Although Joaquin's claim sounds overly universalist and transhistorical—no person may be deemed to contain the multitudes of all epochs—his view of a person nevertheless illustrates the method of composition used in the *Almanac*. For Joaquin, the multiplicity of detail that comprises a person and the simultaneity of temporalities through which a person moves are emblematic of the *Almanac* as well. From the point of view of the theories of nationalism upheld by Brennan and Bhabha, the *Almanac* typifies the composite and bricolage characteristic of the nation and the simultaneous co-existence of multiple levels of temporality within it. Joaquin's insertions of numerous historical materials explode the singular linear progress of history and propose a kind of simultaneous representation of Philippine realities.

Joaquin's imaginative capabilities are located in his propensity to rearrange historical material. Hence, his work does not claim to offer reimagined accounts of historical events, but rather, endeavours to recast, through formal strategies associated with modernism, the ways in which history is constructed. This recasting is done, as my second chapter demonstrates, by methods of compression, correspondence, heteroglossia and montage. Joaquin's critics have pointed out the temporally disruptive characteristic of his aesthetics, as well as the implications of such an approach as regards historical writing. They are also clear about their objections to, and their approval of, such an aesthetic as regards historical writing and representations of the Filipino nation. The value of the *Almanac* is in offering new formal

strategies—disruptive, non-linear—in Philippine literature and history. This is done, paradoxically, by a recourse to an ancient, neglected yet ubiquitous genre.

### **Conclusion: Unrealised Coherences, Thwarted Conjunctions**

It is instructive, by way of conclusion, to compare Joaquin's aesthetic strategies and their political implications in the *Almanac* with the account of Manila's coherence and dissolution in his essay "Sa Loob Ng Maynila." Joaquin distinguishes between the Manila before the Second World War and the Manila that came after. Before the war—which corresponded to the years of Joaquin's childhood and young adulthood—Intramuros, the walled city within Manila built during the Spanish occupation, served as the city's core: "the mysterious wondrousness of Intramuros [stood for] the very vitals, the hid heart, [and] the secret soul" of Manila ("Sa Loob" 116). For Joaquin, Intramuros was the locus of coherence. Joaquin observes how "intensely the prewar Manileño *lived* there" [emphasis in original] and the "importance [Intramuros] had in its communal calendar." In Joaquin's view, Intramuros was the "center round which Manila moved as a coherent community, sharing and continuing certain observances and traditions" ("Sa Loob" 121).

Joaquin describes how throughout the year, Manileños from various districts would gather in feasts organised by religious orders based in Intramuros: in January, Augustinians celebrated the Santo Niño and the conversion of St. Paul the Apostle. In February, Capuchin monks would organise the novena for the Virgin of Lourdes. In March, Dominicans and Recollects would be in charge of Lenten cults and the devotions to St. Joseph. There were feasts marked in the liturgical calendar until December, when the Immaculate Conception would be honoured by the Jesuits and Franciscans, and the Manila Cathedral would be resplendent in white and blue flags. Throughout the year, the liturgical calendar would feature celebrations, feasts, devotions, and rites ("Sa Loob" 120-121).

The coherent community made possible by the regular observance of feast days was inseparable from a fixed sense of place. Intramuros, for Joaquin, was the "collective high

altar formed by its [seven] churches": San Francisco, Santo Domingo, the Manila Cathedral, San Ignacio, San Agustin, San Nicolas, and Lourdes ("Sa Loob" 119). Hence, in Joaquin's view, the crucial factor that led to the social cohesion of prewar Manila was a regular cycle of activities—as indicated in the liturgical calendar—that occurred in traditional religious spaces within Intramuros. Seen in this light, the rituals which ensured the continuity within the Manila community were bound up with stable and coherent notions of time and place.

Joaquin marks the start of the dissolution of Manila's social bonds to the years immediately following the war, when due to a "failure of nerve," the ones who "should have been most faithful to [the city chose] to abandon it instead" ("Sa Loob" 126). My study does not go into the precise reasons for Manila's decline; I do not aim to settle the question of whether or not the city has declined, or whether what seems to be decline is actually a symptom of uneven development, or how the notion of "decline" might be suitably defined to begin with. Joaquin blames the "timidity and indifference" of the friar orders who chose to rebuild their churches in other parts of the city; urban planners like Paulo Alcazaren and Manuel Caoili attribute the loss of coherence to social and political factors such as poor government management.

For Joaquin, what is clear is that after the war, Manila's core—Intramuros—would never recover from the devastation wrought by the constant bombardment by American and Japanese forces; Intramuros was a "mass of ruins: the hulk of the Ayuntamiento, the great shell of the Cathedral, the piled rubble of Fort Santiago" ("Sa Loob" 125). Moreover, the genteel and urbane community which had converged at the various churches would be steadily replaced by informal settlers who built their shanties amidst the ruins: "harbingers of the big wild shantytown," a presaging of the "time of the squatter," the "invasion and conquest of Manila" by poorer provincials who sought a better life in the city ("Sa Loob" 125).

Although these comments (as well as his sentiments as regards the observance of rituals in sacred spaces like churches) may be read as an instance of Joaquin's politically conservative stance—the "invasion and conquest" of people from the provinces turning his beloved city into a "big wild shantytown"—they also make clear that Joaquin's response to Manila's decline is characterised by a sense of nostalgia inseparable from a desire for restoration. For example, he calls for another "Santo Domingo on the site of the old one," the reconstructed church "perhaps no longer gothic but still immemorial, with a high altar still dominated by a St. Dominic and a St. Mary Magdalen flanked by a St. Francis and a St. Teresa" ("Sa Loob" 126). But for Joaquin, as long as one structure was missing, the longed-for restoration would remain a dream. Intramuros, for Joaquin, was the *conjunto* [ensemble] of all its traditional temples; without its other colleagues, even the cathedral and San Agustin are merely crown jewels without a crown" ("Sa Loob" 126).

Moreover, not only does Joaquin desire the restoration of structures: the call to see the structures rebuilt is inseparable from the reestablishment of regular rituals: the activities that mark—and are enactments of—the coherent community. For instance, Joaquin writes that in December, the convent of the Recollects would become a "country fair full of provincial folk in *balintawak* and *camisachino* selling pinipig, suman, bukayo, latik, achara, pastillas, honey, fresh eggs, winter fruit, and papier-mache toy carabaos colored red" ("Sa Loob" 126). It was this resumption of the former activities in the traditional places that Joaquin wanted.

For Joaquin, the return of Intramuros to its prewar condition—"all its former churches, chapels, convents, and beaterios"; and aside from the structures, the religious practices and community too—would entail a sense of coherence and completeness: the community of Manileños performing rites in specific areas in Intramuros during fixed times in the calendar. Joaquin desired nothing less than the restoration of the conjunction of time, place and activity. But this, of course, was unrealised: as I pointed out earlier, Joaquin notes

that the friar orders chose to rebuild their churches elsewhere in the city, informal settlers encroached upon Intramuros, and, among the seven traditional structures only Manila Cathedral and San Agustin remain.

Seen in the light of his views of a restored Intramuros, the *Almanac* gestures, in textual form, towards the conjuntos Joaquin imagines for Manila. The calendars compress Philippine history: Joaquin identifies significant events and personalities and plots these in a calendar. Joaquin's calendars are structured by way of the correspondence between nation and religion: by making national and religious events cohabit the same calendar entry, Joaquin makes plain the double constitution of Philippine reality. Moreover, this doubleness extends to temporal orientation: the calendars point to the future as much as the past. This endeavour to make things cohere extends to the essays. Even though Joaquin is concerned with discrepant aspects of Philippine society, culture and history, he nevertheless organises his material by way of temporal association: distinct and disconnected references are placed in the same chapter because they are affiliated with the same month.

However, the attempt at conjunction—a manifestation of cohesion and centripetality—is inseparable from expressions of separation and centrifugality. The multiple genres embedded in the *Almanac* stratify the text, while the fragmentary nature of the essays refuse fixity and undercut linear retellings of Philippine national history. In addition, the references to ruins and missed chances are evocations of decline and failure as much as they mark incipencies and possibilities. The structures Joaquin chooses for the *Almanac*—compression and correspondence for the calendars, fragmentary yet associative writing for the essays—portray the Philippine nation as having a temporality that is multiple and conflicted, marked by thwarted possibilities, gaps in development, yet filled with the possibility of regeneration and restoration. Such a historiographic structure—which is in line with Joaquin's contrarian disposition—interrogates the mode of linear and developmentalist

writing which was dominant in the Philippines during the 1970s, and proposes a manner of historicising that is aesthetically innovative as much as it is politically astute: a way of representing history that privileges the recovery, rearrangement, intrusion, and convergence of various genres and temporalities.

My thesis has addressed a number of gaps in existing scholarship. First, my study has looked at one of the more undervalued aspects of Nick Joaquin's canon and assessed it in the light of scholarship pertaining to his aesthetics, historiography, and notions of nationhood. Second, my study approached Joaquin's *Almanac* by drew from aspects of theories from Mikhail Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, and scholars of nationalism such as Benedict Anderson, Homi Bhabha, and Timothy Brennan; I demonstrated the feasibility of using a mixed conceptual framework and methodologies to unpack the formal, historiographic, and national aspects of a literary and social text from a postcolonial setting.

Nevertheless, my study opens up a number of possibilities for future scholarship. First, an enquiry into Joaquin's historiography and notions of form—especially as regards his sense of nation—may be conducted on his other major works, particularly his novels, plays, and short fiction. Second, more investigations can be done on other neglected areas of Joaquin's oeuvre—his journalism, translations, and children's stories—in order to offer a more synoptic view of his multi-faceted career. Be that as it may, a significant body of scholarship has grown around Joaquin's major works, the most significant of which is San Juan's monograph-length analysis of Joaquin's texts from a Marxist, feminist and psychoanalytic conceptual framework: a third area for future research would be to compile and contextualise existing scholarship on Joaquin and propose new directions for future study. One could use Joaquinian scholarship as a possible frame of reference to map out larger developments and contestations within Philippine and Asian literary and cultural criticism, as it engaged with texts and theories from the UK, US, continental Europe, Africa,

and Latin America. A fourth possibility would be to compare and contrast Joaquin's innovative prose aesthetics with contemporary Filipino writers such as Eric Gamalinda, Miguel Syjuco, and Gina Apostol: authors whose works may be typified by disjunctive approaches in rendering—using the form of the novel—Philippine historical reality. One may argue that Joaquin's strategy of disruptive temporalities opened up new formal possibilities for a new generation of Filipino novelists. One of the characters in Gina Apostol's *The Revolution According to Raymundo Mata*, for instance, refers to (and seemingly deliberately misnames) the so-called "Calendar for Manileños" when checking the date of the Cavite Mutiny (37). Apostol's novel, like Joaquin's heteroglossic *Almanac*, uses multiple genres such as footnotes and dictionaries to refract the narrative of a marginal—and decidedly fictional—character in the Philippine Revolution. A fifth possibility would be to examine in greater detail the literature—particularly poetry and fiction—produced during Martial Law, especially in the light of the tactics of circumvention and progressive aesthetics and politics.

The *Almanac* contains Philippine history in multiple forms and fragments. Its aesthetic fractures are its source of strength, especially when seen in contrast to monolithic narratives of history. In "Sa Loob Ng Maynila," Joaquin recounts an incident in his childhood: he and his siblings would ride through the tunnels of Intramuros on carriages, "open their mouths wide and howl." Their voices would echo: the tunnel would give "back [their] roaring multiplied, as if not three or four but a hundred children were howling" ("Sa Loob"116). Like the tunnel, the *Almanac* is the textual site where Joaquin situates narratives, descriptions and analyses of Philippine history: a place on the page where various voices may inhabit.

In addition, like the Intramuros tunnel where a few voices would become a hundred, the *Almanac*, in Joaquin's hands, is a kind of writing where the story of the Philippine nation is broken and refracted: when the mouth of history opens wide and howls, Joaquin records in



his *Almanac* the roaring multiplied. But without structure, roars disperse into babble. The *Almanac* is situated precisely in the space of contradiction. The *Almanac for Manileños* is both centripetal and centrifugal: its multiplicity is tempered by containment, its discrepant elements cohere not by causation but by association: a nation's stories are articulated in a form that may seem essentially inessential but is simultaneously ancient and new, a genre where the sweep of time is expressed as a gathering of fragments.

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