

THE ELEMENTS OF HISTORY IN PHILIPPINE
NOVELS IN ENGLISH

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of San Carlos

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Literature

by
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December 1968

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The Thesis attached hereto, entitled
THE ELEMENTS OF HISTORY IN PHILIPPINE
NOVELS IN ENGLISH

prepared and submitted by Maria Milagrosa Vinluan
in partial fulfillment for the degree of
Master of Arts in English (Literature)
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University of San Carlos
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the lasting joys derived from reading history is an understanding of the past. Of course, there is no denying that external evidences like sacred relics, archaeological findings, heirlooms, and stories of the past transmitted orally stimulate an understanding of their significance, but only to a certain degree. It is reading history that widens one's vision and perception of the past.

There are two kinds of books which transport the reader to the past: historical and biographical books which provide essential information, and historical novels, which provide the feeling and illusion of sharing the experiences, thoughts and sentiments of men and women who lived in a distant age separated from the present by the natural barriers of time and death.

Anyone living in the present, who is indifferent to, and worse, ignorant of the past, not only suffers from intellectual starvation but also fails to grasp the meaning of life and to experience its pleasure. The complicated and burdensome problems of present day society are an endless muddle to him because he does not understand the past which he can associate parallel present situations. As English-

American poet, T. S. Eliot, puts it,

Time present and time past
 Are both perhaps present in time future,¹
 And time future contained in time past.¹

This ignorance and temporary alienation from the past cannot exist if the enthusiasm for the study of history is aroused or if historical books present historical facts in an interesting manner. Inasmuch as both are found wanting most of the time, a good historical fiction deserves more serious attention than it generally receives.

Statement of the Problem. This thesis is an attempt to present history, i.e., historical events, places and personages, as depicted in Philippine novels in English. It also endeavors to determine to what extent the historical accounts found in the works of Filipino novelists are true or imaginative.

Scope of the Study. The materials mainly considered are seventeen Philippine novels in English of historical relevance. Although three chapters of the study are devoted to Philippine history, the study is by no means limited to events that transpired locally. One chapter concerns the Korean War which affected the Philippines at least indirectly.

¹New Catholic Encyclopedia (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1967), VII, 14.