

EVENT TITLE: Writing South-East Asia Away From The Western Gaze

EVENT DESCRIPTION: How can we tell our stories on our own terms? Five Anglophone writers from Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand talk about reclaiming perspectives and writing that does not pander to orientalist expectations. What does it mean to use English, an imperial language, in this decolonial work, particularly in such multicultural, multilingual countries, and what is the role of translation in navigating this cultural and linguistic fluidity?

Event Moderator:

Jeremy Tiang won the Singapore Literature Prize in 2018 for his novel *State of Emergency*. He has translated over 20 books from Chinese, most recently *Lo Yi-Chin's Faraway*, and is currently Princeton University's Translator in Residence. He also writes and translates plays. www.JeremyTiang.com

Event Participants:

YZ Chin is the author of *Edge Case*, a novel, and the story collection *Though I Get Home*, which won the Louise Meriwether First Book Prize and the Asian/Pacific American Award For Literature honor title. Her translation of *The Age of Goodbyes* by Li Zishu is forthcoming.

Sunisa Manning is a Thai and American novelist. She's the author of *A Good True Thai*, which was a finalist for the 2020 Epigram Books Fiction Prize for Southeast Asian Writers. The recipient of the Steinbeck Fellowship, a residency from Hedgebrook, and other honors, she lives in California.

Thirii Myo Kyaw Myint is the author of the novel *The End of Peril, the End of Enmity, the End of Strife, A Haven* (Noemi Press, 2018), which won an Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature, and *Names for Light: A Family History* (Graywolf Press, 2021), which won the Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize.

Gina Apostol's last novels, *Insurrecto* and *The Revolution According to Raymundo Mata*, explore the Philippine revolutions against America and Spain. Her third novel, *Gun Dealers' Daughter*, won the 2013 PEN/Open Book

Award. Her first two novels won the Juan Laya Prize (Philippine National Book Award).

Opening Remarks:

- Welcome to our panel on Anglophone writing from South-east Asia. I'm Jeremy Tiang, and I am joined here by Sunisa Manning and Gina Apostol, and on the screen by Thirii Myo Kyaw Myint and YZ Chin.
- Today we will reflect on what it means for our writing practices that we write in English, a colonial language, and how this has affected our work.
- What are the strategies with which we have tried to reclaim the language for our ourselves, rather than reinscribing colonial hierarchies?

Moderator Questions:

- What are your language journeys, and how did you come to write in English? Was this a conscious choice, and how do you think it has affected your work?
- Do you use other languages in your work? What part does translation play in your writing practice?
- What is your research process, and how does it account for the Western gaze? How do you navigate the fact that many historical sources are colonial in origin?
- Many of our books have incorporated resistance movements such as insurrections and demonstrations.