FROM THE EDITOR

Since the late 1980s, cultural studies and postcolonial theory have fought for the recognition of other, subaltern voices that are otherwise unarticulated and repressed in the context of social power and colonial subjugation. What marginalizes these voices is the hegemony that the structures of domination and oppression so constitute and which creates the "naturalness" of beliefs, attitudes, values, and language that people subscribe to as they go on with their everyday lives. The normal, which is hegemonic, is manifest everywhere from the self-regulated, disciplined body at work or play to the ideology of the canonic texts and expressions, with its attendant fetish for disembodied form at the expense of human meaning and agency. What gets silenced in the articulation of a hegemonic project is the knowledge of others whose humanity is built from different subject positions, epistemologies, and local cultural sensibilities. It is in the spirit of envoicing lesser known discourses and genres of expressive culture in Philippine Humanities that this issue is dedicated to.

Against the backdrop of Philippine folkloristics that has focused so much attention to epics about cultural heroes, Rosario de Santos argues for the importance of exploring Ifugao *alim*, lengthy chanted dramatic narratives sung by elderly men in a ritualized context. This is done for the well-being of sponsors. Unlike the well-known Ifugao *hudhud* (female chant in antiphonal chorus) that has been canonized by UNESCO as intangible heritage, alim is artistically elaborate and is esoteric knowledge; it is associated with the wealthy and the religious specialists. While de Santos did not offer a hypothesis as to why outsider researchers such as Beyer, Barton, and Manuel mentioned the genre only superficially, it can be inferred that alim may be less popular because its performance is rare, given the fact that it entails many animals for sacrificing and many singers to render it properly. In the context of its rarity, de Santos's work is very valuable. It reminds us that there is more to study beyond the more common hudhud. In the article, de Santos meticulously offers a substantial description of the performed song structure she documented *in situ* in the barangay of Piwong (Hinyong, Ifugao) in 1975, its content (which is about the conflicts and resolution of antagonistic relations between adult males and females), and the notion of voice in narrating. The ritualistic character of that performance (which is probably normative) is evident in the elaborateness of its communal participation. The analyzed performance entailed the sacrifice of eight pigs contributed by the sponsoring couple (husband and wife) and meant the

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continuous alternation of some 18 adult men in a leader-response texture for many hours. The content of alim reflects upon the ambivalences of male-female relations and their orderly societal restoration in Ifugao society. De Santos is indeed right in interpreting the alim as "ritual song" for it embeds a desired ethos in it and it is participatory.

The non-visibility of alim in folkloristic literature finds a parallel in Noel Moratilla's essay on the quasi-autobiographical genre *testimonio*. The parallelism, however, is ironic, for the non-visibility of alim in Philippine folklore studies has to do with its heterodoxy, being rarely performed and produced by the wealthy class in Ifugao society. In Moratilla's work in contrast, we find the narratives of the really poor in Philippine society, the laborers in a foreign-owned shipyard, whose owners exploited and abused them. Moratilla writes that the testimonio is a counternarrative for it speaks from the experiential view of the underdogs in a capitalist system. While not new, it resonates with Rey Ileto's "history from below" as popularized in his book, *Pasyon and Revolution*, which data also comes from the subjugated, that is, testimonies of captured revolutionaries. As a counternarrative or resistance to the "taken for granted" (i.e., belief in the benevolence of capitalism), none can be as obvious as laborers writing the experience of humiliation in the face of capitalist oppression. Thus, the laborers' testimonios interrogate the presence of cruelty and injustice in a relationship marked by a political asymmetry. Many of the approximately 20 testimonios (Moratilla's corpus) painfully describe the harrowing experience of the "refresher course," which was actually meant to exploit the workers. In cleaning the garbage, the workers themselves eventually lose human dignity by becoming like an excrement to be dreaded at the capitalist compound. Some workers were physically abused and one was sexually harassed. For the writers, their words of despair, as Moratilla explains, offer the possibility of hope. For us readers, the testimonios interpellate us to heed to "public time" in which we become more vigilant against social injustices.

The third article in this issue also deals with non-visibility of marginalized expressions, this time in the context of linguistic imperialism and hegemony. Barbaza discusses vernacular literature in Bikol language that was written by Juan Rafael "Johnny" Belgica, Sr. (1917-?) and his son, Juan Rafael "Jun" Belgica, Jr. (1951-). Using local knowledge (*rugaring*), Barbaza compares the excellence of Johnny's traditional Bikolano poetry (*rawit-dawit*), which is based on *korido* (four, 12-syllabled lines a stanza that has a recited improvised quality), with Johnny's attempt to write narrative (*osipon*) in the English

"short story" style. Barbaza muses that Johnny's collection of works in English is poor compared to rawit-dawit, for the former is "stolen" from the American masters, while the latter has fitness because of Johnny's competence in the verbal art of rawit-dawit, i.e., constructing rhythm, scansion, and rhyme with fluency. Barbaza believes that the awkwardness of Johnny using English is proof to the distortion in consciousness when it is invaded by foreign language that belongs to another world. It is with an interventionist act that Jun Belgica, Johnny's son, growing up during the tumultuous years in the Philippines (late 1960s to 1970s), offers an agenda for decolonizing the mind of Bikolano literature. Jun wrote a book *Toob*, which is a pun, an inversion of the word "boot" to signal the postcolonial desire of decolonizing the Filipino whose mind has been buried by the hegemony and prestige of the foreign language English. An interesting section at the beginning of Barbaza's essay is the discussion of the concept of relationality of self and other (*kapwa*) in Philippine cultures. This is unlike the notion of a bounded self as an individual or *sarili* that any Filipino can recognize.

The issue of relationality as in dialogics comes in the last article lucidly, which is a report of a film project by Minpaku (Osaka) and co-authored by Japanese ethnomusicologist Yoshitaka Terada and Maranaon scholar Usopay Cadar. This essay candidly talks about the personal engagement of the author Terada, who studied the Philippine Maranaon and Maguindanaon *kulintang* in the University of Washington, Seattle and in California and his subsequent short fieldwork visits to Mindanao, which purpose was to film kulintang music in Marawi. Terada also documented the Mindanaon music tradition in Japan and in Baguio City where a number of diasporic Maranaon have lived. Terada then explores the diverse receptions of their documentary film among different audiences in the Philippines: in Quiapo where immigrant Muslims live, in two campuses of the University of the Philippines (in College of Music and in Baguio). He found out that each speech community had a different response to his collaborative work with Cadar. In Quiapo, the multiethnic community wanted representation of other Muslim instruments. In UP College of Music, the audience suggested more text to be included in the film so that it can be more useful as a teaching material, and in Baguio another set of concerns was aired. In Terada's report, one witnesses a type of scholarship that dialogues with the community, such that the community becomes an active participant in the crafting of a representation instead of being its passive subject. In effect, a multiplicity of voices is incorporated, a value that the academe has subscribed to in its effort to articulate voices once submerged by the rule of the canonic and hegemony.

Lastly, Moreal Camba's review of Francisco Sionil Jose's novel "The Feet of Juan Bacnang" (2011, Solidaridad Publishing House) complements the suasive articles contained in the issue. Lauding the author – the multi-awarded National Artist in Literature Jose-Camba emphasizes the didactic, social critical nature of Jose's work, which, according to her, reflects the lived world that the author himself had experienced in his hometown in the province of Pangasinan and in Manila. By means of an allegory and "magical realist" style where boundaries between fiction and reality dissolve, Jose paints the tragic story of the disillusioned protagonist Juan Bacnang, an illegitimate son of a politician in Manila who lives in a world where human relationships are determined by undemocratic, feudalistic patronage politics and corruption. The novel, however, does not end with despair and self immolation but of hope in the return to a more authentic self and of the possibility of social transformation for the betterment.

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