FROM THE EDITOR

This issue contains four essays that will draw readers into thinking about new "things" in Philippine humanities. These would have gone unarticulated had the authors been bound to the narrow rubrics of their disciplinary specializations.

The first essay by José Edgardo A. Gomez Jr., "Utopia, Bensalem, Atlantis and the Philippine City: The Challenges of Linking Selected Arcadian Literature to *Pinoy* Urban Reality," comes from the field of urban planning. This work reads three classical literary texts from the West, specifically arcadian writings such as Plato's *Atlantis*, More's *Utopia*, and Bacon's *New Atlantis*, and explores the relation between particular historical-material environments and the imaginary visions of utopic societies that were creatively spun from the former. Utopia, Bensalem, and Atlantis are fictions embodying a partially shared ideal society. Gomez finds that each was historically situated and significant to a time, place, and city culture in the West, and uses these texts to assess the application and value of such historical imaginations to Philippine urban realities. While an urban planner does not normally indulge in contextual literary criticism, it moves Gomez to engage with it so as to unpack the ideologies behind geospatial envisioning and governance of a population marked by differences in time and space.

Contemporary Philippine urban reality is, of course, nestled within an entirely different social historical context. Philippine cultures are archipelagic, literally and culturally, for they have been borne out of colonial histories that spawned many divisions. Yet, Gomez argues that the idea of integrative city planning has resonated with the aspirations of the Filipino people. Should these utopic writings be useful, they have to address the heterogenous composition of Philippine citizenry. In addition, Gomez believes that arcadian writing from the West can be a lynchpin for plotting out ideas of harmony-in-diversity, guiding the redistribution of commonwealth, and even critically informing how urban planners must forge a better prospect for Philippine cities in the future.

The idea of fiction arising from particular histories is also evident in the second essay titled "El Filibusterismo and Jose Rizal as 'Science Fictionist'" by Miguel Paolo P. Reyes. This piece is very intriguing for the way it cleverly misleads the audience to think, given its title, that Rizal's novel *El*

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Filibusterismo is science fiction. Of course, it is not, for the title is just a rhetorical ploy and the review of unrelated literature only a tease. In truth, *Fili* is "science fiction" in the sense that Rizal's novel was heavily influenced by the dominant intellectual outlook of the 19th century, when science and industrialization coincided with developments in optics, magic, and illusion. Rizal was in Europe when he wrote his novels, and the current events around him most likely influenced him, for he could not have thought of measuring the trajectory of the revolver, of advances in eye prosthesis, the time bomb, and a ghost-inducing machine. Reyes contends that unlike most science fictions of the West, which are governed by the trope and polemics of science versus morality, Rizal did not valorize but problematized science in the context of the predicament that grassroots Philippine societies were facing. This leads Rizal to an entirely different reading of science that departed from Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Edgar Allan Poe. While Rizal's outlook was definitely cosmopolitan, i.e., savvy to the scientific development of his time, he was, more importantly, deeply rooted and committed to the Filipino experience, and this is why "science" had a different value in his novels. What makes Rizal's work so engaging, a matter echoed by Reyes's reading of it, is that the character of science has so many meanings in the text. It was evil for the conservative friars. It was a tool for anarchic liberation for Simoun and Basilio, who nevertheless were tempered by the thought of love for their beloved. Science was meaningless for the coachman, who subscribed to the millenarian myth of the return of King Bernardo Carpio, and it was not a sufficient condition for revolution, according to the wisdom of Fr. Florentino, who saw the will of God as necessary.

The issue of context giving meaning to text is taken up in the third essay by Jason D. Petras, which comes from the field of psychology. This piece uses the methodology of linguistics, but because its subject matter deals with emotions and feelings in local, culture-sensitive, cognitive scenarios, its inclusion in the present issue is warranted. Building upon the anti-colonial works of Virgilio Enriquez's indigenous Philippine psychology, the author argues against the indiscriminate mapping out of Anglo-American psychological categories in understanding non-Western psychologies. Petras illustrates that cultural nuances so permeate the semantics of the word "happiness" in Filipino culture. The author supports this by delineating the various glosses of words related to the feeling of "happiness" or "saya." Words like "aliw," "tuwa," "wili," "galak," and so on has each a distinctive

feature in the domain subsumed by the English concept of "happiness." The complexity of this indigenous thought on the matter goes to show how central the concept of happiness is to its culture bearers, the Filipinos.

The fourth essay in this issue comes from film studies. Specifically, it is historically-contextualized film criticism by Tito R. Quiling Jr. Using the set of the selected three films produced in the 1970s and 1980s—Gallaga's *Oro, Plata, Mata* (1982), Brocka's *Hellow, Soldier* (1975), and de Leon's *Kisapmata* (1981)—the author explores how home is represented in this medium. In this essay, Quiling analyzes different types of dwellings in Philippine society as these exist in various historical moments: mansions by landed families, a hut in the forest during the war, makeshift shanties in the inner city, and the ubiquitous bungalows of the middle class. Quiling finds out how these dwelling spaces match the characters' consciousness, even shaping them as if protagonists did not have individual agencies.

This issue ends with a review of *Ati-Atihan Lives*, a documentary film by Patrick Alcedo on the Iloilo mixed Sinulog and Dinagyang annual dance festival. Reviewer Ruth Jordana Pison observes the multilayered representation of meanings that dancers in this festival enact.

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