FROM THE EDITOR

The performance of identity is one of the key indicators of cultural distinction within societies. The techniques and narratives of staging, characterization, imagination, and a public co-affiliation with the performer's role as a catalyst of the world views and discourses of beingness lead the scholar to the reflection that performance does not merely constitute an "end" of a process, but rather, the reiteration of a changeable continuity of voices within. It is the polysemy of these voices that typifies the assertion of either a collective reiteration or an individuated role that intersects with others, and whose dialogic processes makes us feel human—and makes humanities a compelling field of inquiry into the conditions of the social, the political, the ideological, and the economic within societies.

Excavating and analyzing this "performativity" thus constitutes one of the most compelling fields of scholarly inquiry. By opening the possibility that all societies "perform" their identities, the Editorial Board of *Humanities Diliman: A Journal on Philippine Humanities*, in this Issue No. 1 for 2015, would like to advance the idea that the aesthetics of cultural performativity is a dense source of social voices that articulate specific positions of class, ethnicity, gender, and affect rooted in the realities of history, social structuration, and the fraught processes of nationalization and globalization that constantly engage local communities and their writers, filmmakers, and artists.

Jay Jomar Quintos's study of *The Parang Sabil of Abdullah and Putli' Isara*, a traditional Tausug song on a couple's militant resistance to the Spanish occupation of Jolo, forms the first performative index of voices that speaks of native resistance against imperialism that is articulated in both ethnic and religious terms. Considered a "subversive text" that was potent enough for Martial Law administrators to ban its airing over radio, the *parang sabil* encapsulates the melding of the Tausug's cultural distinction, as informed and guided by Islam, into a narrative of local resistance through ritualized "suicide attacks." This violence is argued by Quintos as a consequence of the emotional state of Tausugs alienated by western colonization that rationalizes physical sacrifice—as well as the partial destruction of the occupiers—as the desired solution to oppression. Death thus becomes an anticipatory state of fulfilling the obligations of the faith through *dar ur Islam*, the global Islamic community whose defense against the inroads of other faiths is paramount. Death also becomes a desired state of reunion by those torn apart by colonial violence. In this case, the rape of Putli' Isara by a

ISSN 1655-1524 Print / ISSN 2012-0796 Online

Spanish captain becomes the impetus of the *parang sabil* not only of Putli' Isara, but also of her betrothed Abdullah, mother, and younger sibling. These voices of resistance are articulated not merely to reiterate the identification of the Tausug as Muslim. It is also seen by Quintos as Sulu's historical contribution to the narratives of revolutionary resistance that can be affiliated with the Katipunan struggle in Luzon in 1896—events that were contemporary to each other and connected by common causes, but whose local differences imply peculiar articulations and "effects."

The argumentation of anti-colonial resistance staged as literature can also be seen in Rommel Rodriguez's study of "prison literature" written by Jose Rizal, Isabelo de los Reyes, and Aurelio Tolentino, pioneers of Philippine literature that articulated the reasons for their (often unjust) imprisonment in ways that prefigure later instances of political persecution against writers. Focusing on the period of Filipino revolutionary resistance against Spain and the United States between 1896 and 1903, Rodriguez focuses not just on the literary mode of political imprisonment that these well-known authors produced, but also on the conditions of incarceration in the colony where such writing was undertaken. Excavating the modern discourse of the prison as an instrument of surveillance, subjugation, and self-censorship, Rodriguez interlinks the colonial agenda with incarceration and "reform," placing the works of these incarcerated writers as a destabilizing text that questions the rationale of "carceral power" in favor of a liberal critique against injustice. This is seen in Rodriguez's motific use of "chain and metaphor" (*tanikala at talinhaga*) as a means of articulating each authorial voice as they encounter and experience the epistemological—and physical—violence of colonial incarceration. This starts from Rizal's prison diary entries and his final poem *Mi Ultimo Adios*; to Isabelo de los Reyes' prison memoirs and letters against frailocracy and for the establishment of worker's unions; and to Tolentino's incarceration for his seditious play *Kahapon, Ngayon, at Bukas*—an incarceration extended to his theater company, as well as regional audiences raided by the Americans. Foregrounding their literature as chain and metaphor, Rodriguez prefigures the latter 20th Century literary struggles against authoritarianism, and argues for a continuity of authorial feeling expressed in the general rubric of nationalism.

The conflation of different voices within narratives also creates a complexity of identification that can be argued across several theoretical perspectives. One of these is the idea of "entanglement," or the condition of mixing, overlapping, and/or adding together various ideas, aesthetic sources, and practices in which each strain could still be distinctly seen in the eventual result—a distinctiveness

that is presumably lost in the "osterized" blending of hybridity. This is the analytic favored by Sir Anril Pineda Tiatco and Amihan Bonifacio-Ramolete in their study of the *Papet Pasyon* of Teatro Mulat. Founded by Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio, and holding an annual puppet play based on the traditional *pasyon* and *sinakulo* during Lent since 1985, *Papet Pasyon* is investigated by the authors as a thick cultural text in which various Asian performative traditions of puppetry, such as Japanese *bunraku* and Indonesian *wayang golek*, are fused with western Passion plays like the one held at Oberammergau, as well as the colonial *sinakulo* theater, resulting in an amalgamation of performance "voices" that speak in different cultural turns, but aim to foreground a singular theatrical effect. The multiplicity of these various "entangled effects," as staged in the *Papet Pasyon*, is argued as a strategy by Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio in integrating these disparate streams of culture, focusing them into a contemporary children's theatre format that entertains, informs, and co-affiliates with the audience's Catholic faith. This is seen as a dedicatory practice that Teatro Mulat invests in as *panata*—a sacred annual vow that binds performers and audiences together in an obligatory restaging. At the same time, this dedication to a performative faith opens this vision of theatrical community through a global admixture of theatrical forms, texts, and practices.

On the other hand, a peculiarly untranslatable Filipino term for "feeling" is identified by Dennis S. Erasga as a key concept that opens a myriad of voices in his investigation of the social in Philippine sociological discourse. Called *pakikiramdam*, this affect-based social nexus of "the feeling one has for others" is argued based on an indigenous epistemic praxis that disavows western models of theory-building and theorization, and which Erasga identifies as *pagdadalumat*. *Pagdadalumat* is "theoretically" argued by Erasga as rooted in contextual analysis, as opposed to the textual formations of western scientific discourse as well as theory-building. By siting this contextual analysis of *pagdadalumat* to the social (that is, as expressive, observant, transmissive, contemplative, personal, and meaning-formation through experience), Erasga foregrounds *pakikiramdam* as a key articulation of feeling-as-thinking, and thus turns the cognitive-affective divide on its head. Thinking through the feeling for others thus results in other key concepts that can be used to explore Philippine sociology through alternative modalities of native communicative practice (*pakikipagtalastasan*), anchored on specific Filipino social constructs (*lapit*, *galang*, *hiya*, and *lusot*), as well as their corresponding indicators (*relasyon, kapwa, sitwasyon,* and *kahihinatnan*).

What do all of these native social terms imply in the humanistic search for the enrichment of meaning and discourse? It is the central role that the person plays

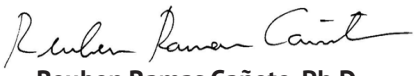
in organizing the knowledge system that constructs the social world as a felt series of engagements, alliances, dialogues, contestations, and "empathic distances" between the self and others that the study foregrounds, critically, through the idea of *interrelations*. Each node in this terrain of "post-theory" is in effect an interacting voice that one engages on multiple levels of discourse, refusing simple binaries and diachronies in favor of complex, "organic" networked relations that change through experience. By situating this analysis of feeling as knowing, Erasga also challenges normative ideas of "science" that simplify the human experience to predictable formulas.

This search for organized complexity—and the native self rooted in this felt experience—could also be argued in more structured forms like cinema. Diana F. Palmes and Feorillo A. Demetillo III's use of Kohlbergian Analysis of the moral reasoning found in six films of National Artist Lino Brocka unveils the complex Filipino moral and political world that Brocka was "lensing" between 1974 and 1986. Using Lawrence Kohlberg's Levels and Stages of Moral Development, the authors track Brocka's filmic narratives as they progress from Kohlberg's lower levels of moral reasoning ("Punishment and Obedience" or "Instrumental-and-Relativist") to higher levels ("Social Contract Legalistic" or "Universal Ethical Principle"). Focusing on the films *Tinimbang Ka Nguni't Kulang, Maynila Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag, Insiang, Jaguar, Bayan Ko: Kapit Sa Patalim,* and *Orapronobis*, the authors identify key moral dilemmas posed by Brocka (particularly, the depiction of sex, domestic violence, and political repression against the underclass, necessitating action or agony from middle class protagonists) that resolve into arguments that favor higher levels of the Kohlbergian scale: that is, away from the particular, and towards the universal. This tends to view Brocka's films as a means of catharsis from the negative conditions of Philippine society, and aim towards a positive moral ground anchored on the resolutions of plot and decisive actions of protagonists. In a way, Palmes and Demetillo reiterate Erasga's argument that personal feeling forms a crucible that forges one's knowledge towards desirable ends—while departing from the relativistic particularism of this same feeling by intuiting Brocka's own fixed moral world, which is based on equitable justice and a belief in the enlightenment discourse of universal humanism.

Lastly, the Review Section of this issue looks at the voice of the audience-as-performer from the perspective of game studies. Dominique Angela Juntado's review of the video game *Andres Bonifacio: Aswang Hunter* is a refreshing analysis of the interactivity of video games manufactured by local content programmers—in this case, Team Algo. Juntado provides an overview of the video game's content

and strategy, which is anchored on both the "first person-shooter" game format, as well as the "alternative history" format popular in the 2000s of major historical personalities as monster hunters (i.e. Abraham Lincoln as Vampire Slayer). In this case, Katipunan founder Andres Bonifacio's last moments in the Cavite highlands before his execution becomes a takeoff point in developing the unlikely plot of Andres trying to save his brother Procopio from a roving *aswang*. Juntado's close analysis of the game format, from the list of goals to its playability, and her reflection on characterization and digital modeling vis-à-vis the entertainment value versus historical detail arguments make this review an interesting site of debate on the value of video games as both educational and entertainment modalities, where the audience-as-gamers make their own decisions as to what works, and whose voice predominates.

From the "classic" texts of native anti-colonial resistance; to the revaluation of the *socius* as a result of feeling and morality; cultural mixing for pedagogical purpose; and engaging in the global discourses of nation, popular culture, entertainment, and media texts, the articles and review of this Issue 1 for 2015 is hoped to engage the reader in a reflexive mediation of textuality and performativity as mutual coordinates that search for the Filipino as human.



Reuben Ramas Cañete, Ph.D.
Editor–in-Chief