FROM THE EDITOR

Over the past forty years, discourse is often argued as the central premise in the production of humanist texts. Derived from both the semantic as well as critical traditions that denote and imply communicative signs (Michel Foucault's notion of *énoncés* is a lucid realization of this context), discourse is copiously "troubled" by the loading of signification to its textual form—the way that certain written statements create normative conditions of knowledge formation through repetition and exhortation. However, the persuasive aspect of communication is often seen as a separate branch in language, that which is occupied by *rhetoric*. Nominally attached to the study of oral communication, rhetoric may also be seen and reified as a symptom that lurks underneath the logic of discourse, especially when texts (and the signs that imply their normative or reified meanings) depart from the disinterest of reason, and charge into the pathos of reader-oriented subjectivity. In a sense, discourse can be seen as a site of rhetorical force, in that the instrumental applications of the former (usually codified by the components of invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory) are wedded to the textual form of the latter, creating a "linguistic turn" that channels both reason and emotion into a single communicative act.

In this issue of *Humanities Diliman*, Volume 12, Number 2, that intertwined relationship between texts and persuasion (this time by an author to his or her readers, rather than an orator to his/her listeners) can be plotted against a variegated tapestry of issues and advocacies that "trouble" Philippine Humanities in the present. In the case of J. Neil Garcia, the teaching of Philippine literature in English presupposes an "otherness" that defies the normative universality of Western literary norms due to the specifically postcolonial nature of this literature's "political unconscious." Utilizing the theory of alterity from Emmanuel Levinas, Garcia argues that the project of interpreting the literary subject (by a teacher to his/her pupils) becomes an exercise of realizing the "absolute other" that is the author's position relative to the reader. Using as an example a deconstructive reading of Paz Marquez Benitez's "Dead Stars," Garcia shows the alienation that occurs when the task of Anglophone literature is "translated" across the colonial body of the writer (a middle-class Filipina), the "object" of her authorial gaze (fellow colonial Filipinos and foreigners), as well as the postcolonial subjects interpellating the text (the present Filipino readers). What is significant in Garcia's argument

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of otherness is the additional layer of complexity that is daisy-chained to his own positionality as a queer writer and teacher. The resultant site of Garcia's (Levinasian) alterity becomes a charged interface between postcoloniality, deconstruction, pedagogy, and gendered identity. Persuading through an aesthetic of otherness, Garcia's reification of alterity becomes a vehicle where an-other possibility of the Filipino human "being" can exist as a viable rhetoric of the ethical self.

Another possibility of persuasion embedded within the critique of discourse is Marlon James Sales' study of Francisco Blancas de San Jose's *Arte y regla de la lengua Tagala* (1610), a "pioneering text" in the syntactic—as well as semantic—codification of Tagalog in the mind of both colonizer and colonized. Although limited to a detailed analysis of the text's preface that dealt with the process of translation, Sales argues that the colonial "capture" of Tagalog is established through a network of equivalences with the established languages of the colonizer, Latin and Castilian Spanish—the latter serving as the metalinguistic "scaffold" upon which Tagalog is interdicted and "inferred," thus reconstructed and disseminated with colonial signification. Going beyond the normative conventions of deriving "true meaning" of a native language through an analysis of its stated morphology and syntax rules, Sales also argues that the cultural conventions of Castilian translation act as a lens through which colonial epistemology—specifically a Christo-centric linguistic praxis—becomes embedded as part of the meaning-sign system of Tagalog-through-Castilian. This "refraction" of Castilian metalinguistic intent into native morphemic and syntactic knowledge "infects" Tagalog with a colonial mindset designed to subdue and transform native textuality (therefore "reality") through the mirrored dialectic of *reconquista, reduccion*, and *pueblo*. Another trajectory is Sales's identification of an intertextual modality that allows this translation and transformation to occur within the colonial subject, setting the stage for the reproduction of Tagalog texts that reify both the colonizer's tradition and epistemology, and the ability of the colonized to interface and incorporate native knowledge systems as a means of both to cope with each other's (textual) co-existence.

Generated for the purpose of missionary conversion and administration, the Tagalog-through-Castilian translational praxis that Sales interdicts bring forth two central tenets of classical rhetoric: the ideas of *pathos* (the ability of a speaker to emotionally bond with his audience through recognizably empathic—thus, cultural—signs); and *memoria* (the ability to conjure a terrain

of knowledge based on collective textual-historical experience). Conflating their effects to a public through a narrative of co-affiliation and moral suasion is a central dynamic that is observable when one investigates the use of narratives that identify the self through, for example, the tropes of heroism and victimhood. The study of the narratives behind the Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) by Jean Encinas-Franco gives cognizance of the former; while the study of the oral narratives of Filipino Comfort Women by Oscar Tantoco Serquiña Jr. lenses the latter.

The study of Jean Encinas-Franco focuses on the generation of the discourse of the *bagong bayani* (literally, "new heroes") over the forty-plus years since the outflow of labor power was officially sanctioned by the Philippine state. Instituted through the labor laws of President Ferdinand Marcos, and vastly expanded by President Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino, Encinas-Franco situates the production of this heroic narrative within the political, social, and economic contexts of the post-People Power Revolutionary period, when state capacity weakness and inadequate national capital development allied with an emergent globalization to "create" the international job market through which millions of Filipinos were to be fed through as its laboring underclass. By declaring that the OFWs were the bagong bayani of the nation, Aquino's aggressive promotion of labor export becomes normatized as part of the discourse of self-sacrifice that the body politic had to undergo in order to be transformed from "indolent" to "productive" bodies, feeding the nation with their foreign remittances more effectively than the lethargic local economy could ever hope to achieve. By choosing to locate the analytic of her study in both discursive as well as contextual grounds, Encino-Franco interdicts the state-sanctioned narrative of labor heroism with a nuanced critique of the state's failure at national mobilization of productive resources; and its recourse into the more traditional linguistic frame of (Christian) self-sacrifice for its citizens to go and work abroad "for the sake of family and nation." Crucially, Encinas-Franco locates this discourse as a normative rather than natural narrative, dependent on the acquiescence of the laboring OFWs to reaffirm their heroism, and silencing dissent to this narrative as a doubled problematic of "betrayal" and "cowardice."

On the other hand, victimhood as a rhetorical narrative is explored by Oscar Tantoco Serquiña Jr. in his study of the oral narratives of ten Filipino Comfort Women. The survivors of a horrific act of state-sanctioned Japanese military conscription as sex slaves during the Second World War, these comfort women voice their pain, shame, anger, and defiance to the system that

dehumanized them, and illustrating their stark condition through the invocation of personal memory. Serquiña uses Ernest Bormann's Symbolic Convergence Theory to analyze the content, verify the salient structures, and determine the rhetorical vision in the comfort women's oral narratives. Crucially, Serquiña describes his study as a means of detecting the pattern of characters, settings, and plotlines embedded within these narratives that constitute these women's *rhetorical vision* of the future, in both structural and ideological terms. This vision is staged as a social drama that visualizes a just and warless society; renders war as the major culprit of Filipinos' (abjected) lives, and highlights the comfort women's own role in fighting militarization and in seeking social justice, one that they pass on to the youth as a charged advocacy, utilizing female elderly memory as its witness. These rhetorical tropes circumscribe the idea that victimhood is not merely a passive act of receiving the (textual and real) oppression of sex masters/warriors. Victimhood also becomes a trope in the elucidation of a worldview that points accusatory fingers to the guilty; redeems these women's abjected status as sexual victims in the face of mediatized moral indignation; and reaffirms a pacifist determination as a paradisiacal condition resulting from their experiential horror.

These rhetorical forces circumscribed within a discourse of "sufferance" could be seen as a distinctly postcolonial impetus to reorder the epistemology of the self away from the triumphalist negation of victimhood in war, and the specifically foreign nature of oppression that instigated this abject status. "Knowing" the self is thus an implicit dialectic that results from plotting the coordinates of local knowledge as rooted in concepts of place-ness, linguistic sameness, and a sense of "community" that is insisted upon as unitary, homogenous, and exclusively legible by the "emic scholar." The field of Philippine Studies, specifically encoded within the school of thought known as Pilipinohiya, can be thought off as one such rhetorical narrative of a constitutive knowledge of the Filipino self. Mary Jane Rodriguez-Tatel's study of this movement is seen as a scholastic concern of "knowing the self" outside of the field of epistemological violence inscribed upon the corpus of Philippine Studies by its Castilian or American colonizers. This ability to recuperate a lost sense of (textually) knowing the country, people, and culture is marked among Philippine Studies scholars in Rodriguez-Tatel's study as early as Jose Rizal in the late 1880s, when defending the native's sense of self occurred within the imperialist space of world fairs and (exclusively Western) schools of orientalism. Rodriguez-Tatel then conjoins

the subsequent development of Pilipinohiya within the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), later the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP), particularly under the advocacy of Prospero Covar a century after Rizal's ultimately failed attempts at establishing the field. The structuralist pragmatics of defining Covar's knowledge system in Pilipinohiya (where one's sense of self is divided between the "outside" of the foreign and the "inside" of the native) is teased by Rodriguez-Tatel as a necessary process in delimiting and defining the "inner" sense of being Filipino as a *sensus communis*, opposite to its "outer" foreign equivalences, and imbued with the specifying harmonics of common language, culture, and epistemology. This is then allied with other discourses of Filipino-ness that arose more or less simultaneously with Pilipinohiya, such as the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* movement of Virgilio Enriquez; and the *Pantayong Pananaw* movement of Zeus Salazar, whose discourses dominated the CSSP during the 1980s. Argued from the lens of a nationalist discourse of a common cultural community, Pilipinohiya becomes a productive field of scholarship among an expanding field of Filipino academics in the search of "our" own voices, minds, and visions of what constitutes "our" own "inner sense" of self.

This rhetorical search of the self, unburdened by the epistemological proscription of the other, can best be seen in the investigation of local cultural praxis. Macrina Morados's review of the *Pesta Igal* concert series from 2010 to 2015, forms a rich field of analyzing the "native" from the viewpoint of another "native." A Tausug and Islamic scholar, Morados flags her own traditional biases in looking at the Sama Dilaut, also known as the Bajau, and transforms her viewing/reading of UP Diliman Asian Center's *Pesta Igal* concert series as an affirmative recuperation of native identity, memory, and inter-ethnic communality. Recounting her own childhood experiences with the Bajau, Morados questions the ethnocentric bias that her fellow Tausugs have heaped upon this gentle sea-based people, and leads her to viewing the Bajau dance form called *igal* as a means of signifying cultural equality through its choreography in the *Pesta Igal* series. Discussing the dance's individual elements through the indigenous vocabulary of the Bajau, Morados situates the appeal for *igal* as a thread of aesthetic mimesis coupled by the articulation of a social nexus established by the Bajau's environment, belief system, and sense of celebrating communal continuities. Differentiating the various manifestations of *Pesta Igal* over the course of five years, Morados also charts the physical migrations of an often marginalized people from

their home territories of the Sulu and Tawi-Tawi archipelagos to displaced/migrant communities in Manila and Luzon. Locating this displacement in economic and political contexts, Morados nonetheless identifies the innate strength of the Bajau's humanity in reaffirming their own aesthetic praxis despite their marginalized condition, and provides scholars like herself with another insight in looking at cultural traditions as a manifestation of both the textual and the real.

Arguing for a vision of identity, recuperating and reusing memory, and situating reason within a nexus of emotion, empathy, and the postcolonial condition, the five essays and one review of this issue of *Humanities Diliman* enrich the idea of discourse beyond a textual reckoning of knowledge and power. Discourse also becomes a rhetorical means of "performing criticism," as Jim A. Kuypers argues, since criticism "is a humanizing activity, in that it explores and highlights qualities that make us human."

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