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## Editor's Introduction

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# Editor's Introduction

**T**he notion of José Rizal as a reformist and pacifist is pervasive, but it does not do justice to the complexity of his ideas and person, as many papers that came out of last year's celebration of the sesquicentennial of Rizal's birth endeavored to demonstrate, some appearing in the December 2011 issue of this journal. In this issue Ramon Guillermo suggests that previous attempts to surface Rizal's view of history have been hampered by the analyst's ideological predilection, with tenuous claims that detected the "influence," "echoes," "traces," and "absorption" of the ideas of this or that European thinker. By looking closely at the categories Rizal deployed in the essay, "Filipinas dentro de cien años" (The Philippines a Century Hence), Guillermo finds that Rizal considered intangible "moral forces," as opposed to "material forces" (such as new technologies), as propelling history, constituting its logic and determining social change. In an anti-colonial revolution, the struggle the people must endure would "serve to improve their moral condition" (10), producing the "new men" with the moral character to build a free and independent nation. Using the method of conceptual concordance, Guillermo demonstrates the existence of a common terminology and line of argumentation in Rizal and Clausewitz, which is "too striking to be a simple matter of chance" (26). Like Rizal, Clausewitz deemed "moral forces" over "physical forces" as decisive in war. In identifying the moment to take up arms, Rizal, asserts Guillermo, was guided by a pragmatic reading of historical circumstances.

At the start of the Second World War Japan's victory over European powers in Southeast Asia did call attention to the apparent superiority of "moral forces"—the Japanese martial spirit. Satoshi Ara focuses on one aspect of that war in one locality: the dynamics of Catalino Hermosilla's cooperation with the Japanese in Ormoc, Leyte, where he was the war-time mayor. Ara emphasizes that the Japanese military force in Leyte was relatively small, yet managed to remain in control until the war's end. Ara's narrative, however, is less concerned about the Japanese than about the Filipino side of the conflict. He points out personal differences among local guerrilla leaders and deep divisions and feuds among the local elite—the context in which, according to Ara, Hermosilla's political maneuvers and activities served to further the mayor's personal interests. Whatever the truth of the charges later leveled against Hermosilla, whose political dominance ended after the war, as Ara asserts, this case study would appear to confirm Rizal and Clausewitz's view that in an armed conflict the side that is weak in "moral forces" cannot be ascendant.

Under the rubric of nontraditional security studies, Patricio Abinales analyzes a different kind of threat and the waging of a different sort of war: the war on rat infestation. Rodents inflict incalculable losses in rice production. Abinales narrates that in the 1950s and 1960s politics and the central government's ineptness derailed the campaign to exterminate rodents, leaving local governments and communities to devise their own strategies—impairing the "moral forces" in the war on rats. Starting in the late 1960s, however, with Marcos at the helm of a relatively stronger state, technocrats, scientists, and military personnel joined forces in centrally coordinated operations against rodents. Abinales argues that the war on rats was depoliticized, and rats were pushed out of a lively public discourse. Did "material forces" result in a successful campaign against rats? Rodent infestation declined in the early 1970s, yet Abinales concludes that even at present rats account for at least 10 percent of losses in rice production.

In his commentary, Bao Maohong provides an overview of studies of Philippine history in China since the 1930s, which he presents in three phases defined by the overarching political framework of each period. Bao attributes to Mao Zedong the push for the Chinese to study the history of every country in the world, an ideational strategy that produced studies that conformed to the set materialist understanding

of history. As China began to implement reforms in 1978, historical studies also began to show some openness, culminating in the early 2000s in thematic studies of the Philippines previously unheard of in China. In an accompanying research note, Bao offers a glimpse of his own study of environmental history, particularly deforestation since 1946. Looking at the Philippines from a Chinese perspective confirms some known facts but also offers a fresh, if sometimes unsettling, sensibility.

As *Philippine Studies* begins its sixtieth year of publication, we are pleased to announce that "Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints," which we have carried as a subtitle in the last two years, is now officially part of the journal's title. The specializing on articles with historical and ethnographic content, with ethnography deemed as the history of the present, is our response to the blossoming of many journals on subject matters once previously carried by *Philippine Studies*. We hope readers appreciate this adjustment to the changed context of scholarly publishing in and on the Philippines.

