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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

Notwithstanding the disparity in subject matters, each of the articles in this issue seeks to explain something puzzling and extraordinary. Rather than focus on prominence, Caroline Sy Hau explains the obscurity and obsolescence of Jose L. Angliongto's *The Sultanate* (1969). Michael Cullinane analyzes why, during the first decade of the American imperial adventure in the early twentieth-century Philippines, brigands were set free in Cebu and labeled as repentant revolutionaries, at a time when the colonial government sought to crush all forms of resistance to its authority. Gonzalo A. Campoamor II explores the uncharacteristic spurt in movies on the Japanese occupation at the opening of the twenty-first century, when no such films were made during the fiftieth-year commemorations of the war in the 1990s. Enrique G. Oracion and Malcolm C. Hiponia discuss how ecotourism in Balanan Lake in Negros Oriental has managed to take nature and people in balance, according relative parity to what could easily have become contending factors.

To arrive at their explanations the authors examine the historical context, seen remarkably in the way Hau and Campoamor situate the cultural artifacts they analyze. To assess the propositions on citizenship endorsed in *The Sultanate*, Hau revisits the history of exclusion of Chinese in the Philippine polity, from the Spanish to the American dispensations through to the postcolonial state, culminating in the radical new framework wrought by Marcos's edict on mass naturalization in the mid-1970s—rendering ideas in the novel redundant. For his part, Campoamor positions recent movies on the Japanese war in relation to Japan's official development assistance to and investments in countries that it lost during the war, such as the Philippines, which Japan is said to want to regain through cultural means: Japan's "postcolonial desire." As these capital flows enter the Philippines, so has the movement of migrant

workers in the opposite direction gathered pace and official approval. The somewhat softened image of the Japanese soldier in recent films signals the relative fulfillment of this desire. Campoamor notes, however, that the work of mourning for all that happened in the war has not been completed.

From the margins interesting things happen. Cullinane emphasizes the context of the emerging alliance between American colonialists and elite Filipinos, in particular Sergio Osmeña's ability to leverage the political constituency he had begun to build in Cebu to secure pardon for the Tabal brothers, and at the same time affirm his status as a trusted collaborator. A century later, when devolution had become a byword, the governor of Negros Oriental, Emilio C. Macias II, is able to take the noteworthy step of pursuing strategies to conserve and protect Balanan Lake and concomitantly address the economic needs of a resettled population.

These studies are also decisively comparative, especially seen in Cullinane's method of comparing the divergent circumstances and outcomes between the Tabal brothers in Cebu and Macario Sakay in Manila. While the Tabals are freed, the revolutionary Sakay is executed as a "brigand." The key factor, according to Cullinane, is the Filipino elite involved in each case, his argument advanced through a juxtaposition of Osmeña with the anti-theft Dominador Gomez. Far from a monolith, the colonial state surfaces as a complex field of contested and negotiated actions.

Comparison pervades the other articles. Campoamor plays with the theme of recurrence as he compares movies in the immediate postwar years and in the early 2000s. Oracion and Hiponia compare ecotourism strategies in Balanan Lake and Apo Island, identifying lessons from the latter that can inform the former. Hau compares Angliongto's novel with other novels on the overseas Chinese, and tracks different historical periods and the tropes of land, blood, and conversion. A key analytical device that Hau employs is the patterning of naturalization to religious conversion and the tensions that arise because of the difficulty of ascertaining a political change of heart. In Hau's article the history of the Indonesian Chinese looms large in the vista from which she reads a novel whose author hails from Davao City.

Contextual embedment, historical movement, intelligent comparison, a transnational frame: these aspects of fine analysis and more distinguish the pioneering studies of the Chinese in the Philippines and in Canada by the late Edgar Wickberg, to whom Clark Alejandrino pays a fitting tribute. More importantly, behind the solidity of Wickberg's scholarship was an unassuming, generous, and kindly man.